

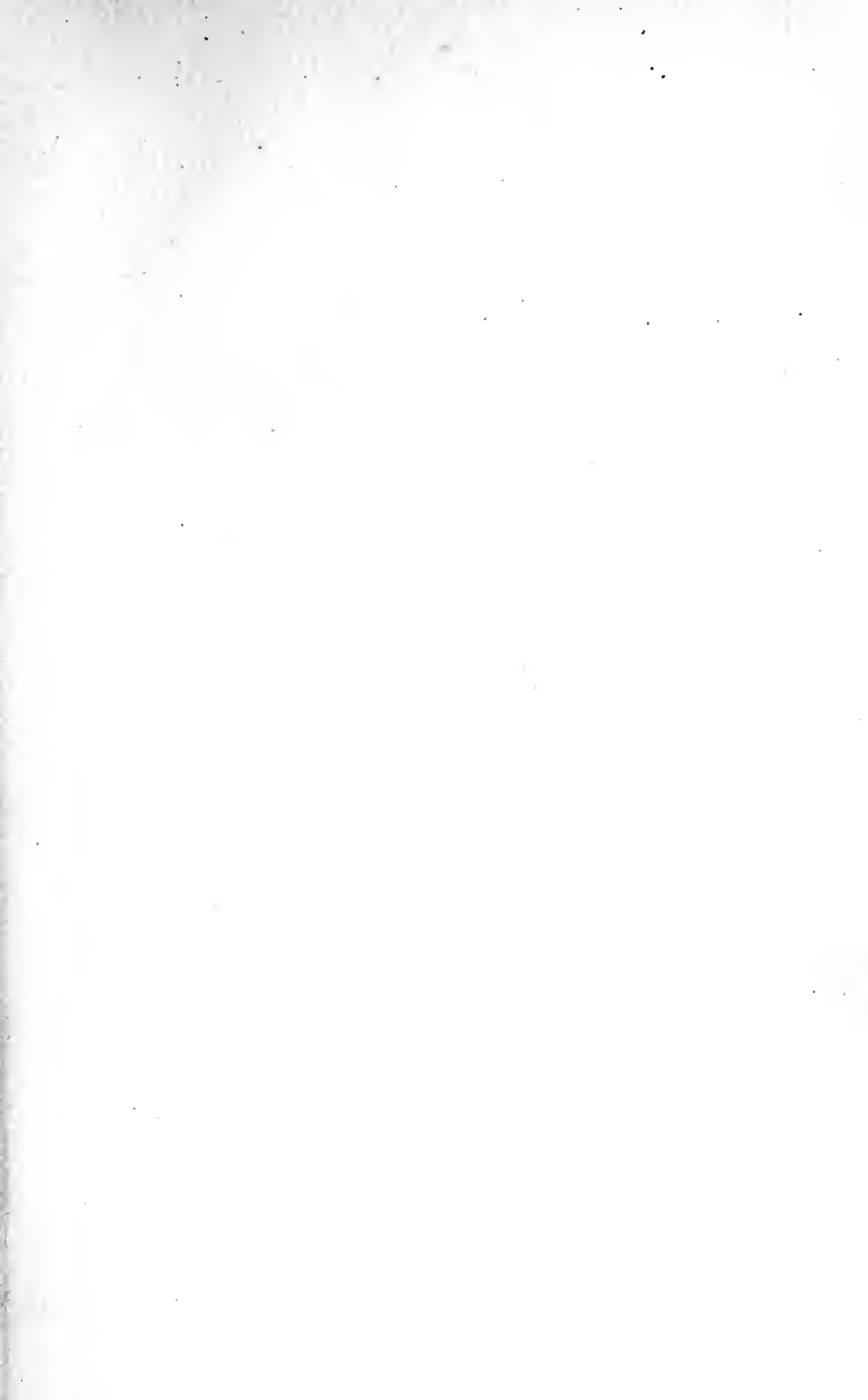
# The Copymaker

*By WILLIAM FARQUHAR PAYSON*



Rev J Allen





“What is copy ?” I queried.

“Inky paper about to become inky type,” answered the cynic.

“And journalism after all is only copy-making.”

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I had never sung a song in my life.

—Page 67, *Frontispiece*.



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# THE COPY-MAKER

BY  
WILLIAM FARQUHAR PAYSON

ILLUSTRATIONS BY H. B. EDDY



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TO  
MY FATHER AND MY MOTHER



## PREFACE

It would be a task of no great difficulty to write here an essay on the true function of the preface. And this might have some savor of originality, for not in all the rhetoric books of my boyhood, nor the lectures of our worthy masters at college, was there a single exhaustive exposition on this subject. Yet, I gravely doubt that even after the ablest possible conclusion to the treatise just threatened (though not for a moment seriously considered) there would still remain the unanswerable question, Why in the world should a book of this sort have a preface anyway? Why try to find some *raison d'être* for "The Copy-maker," in a few introductory paragraphs (of necessity more than half apologetic), when each page newly turned shows indisputably that there is none?

And now that I am on this point, I am reminded concerning my friend, Professor Klatzenberg, of whom mention will be found later, and of his experience with prefaces. Being a man of astonishing versatility, this eccentric genius once enjoyed the good fortune of having two literary works simultaneously published—the one supposedly a most learned book, in two volumes,

entitled, "The History of Pantheism"; the other very cheap, and very yellow, called "The Memoirs of a Ballet Girl."

Now, it so happened that by some curious mischance the Pantheism and Coryphée prefaces becoming transposed, each appeared where the other should have been. But still more surprising was the result of this error, for (although Professor Klatzenberg denies the charge to this day) I have never yet found a reader of both books and both prefaces who has noticed the transposition.

It may be that in each work treating of the ancients there is after all a marked resemblance between them; or, more probably the readers' non-cognizance is due to the professor's wondrously figurative language. Be this as it may, the fact remains—the "true function" missed its mark.

Therefore, like Professor Klatzenberg, who avoids prefaces as he would a plague, I eschew the "true function" to write only this rambling salutation. And with a hearty grasp of each good copy-maker's hand, a godspeed to all—for theirs is a noble profession when nobly used—farewell to them.

But I shall not forget.

W. F. P.

Feb. 8, 1897.

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## CHAPTER I.

I JOIN THE CITY STAFF OF "THE DAILY BREAD"

—ROBINSON AND MY WIFE HEAR THE

NEWS WITH VARIED EMOTIONS.

JANUARY 16, 189—.—As I left the house and heard not even a godspeed from the old man, I was reminded of the stereotyped dismissal of the black sheep from the fold as described by the conventional romancist. I thought of the melodramatic departure of the stage prodigal from beneath the paternal roof, the irate, relentless, overbearing father saying in harsh, cruel tones to his headstrong son: "Go, and never again darken these doors;" and the mother tearfully supplicating and the three sisters standing "up center" holding lace handkerchiefs to their eyes while the proud son at the right upper exit with one hand on the door and the other holding a dress suit case (it used to be a grip-sack in olden days), exclaims, haughtily: "You will never hear of me again; I leave to-night for

Africa," thereupon slamming the door behind him, endangering the equanimity of the scenery and leaving the top gallery in the depths of despair.

I don't exactly know why this hackneyed scene was brought to my mind soon after I took leave of my uncle this morning. Indeed I never can account for the way in which one thing reminds me of another. I once had a friend who used to be reminded of things more easily than any man I ever knew. He had an inveterate habit of saying: "That reminds me of life." He used to walk along the roadside and suddenly stop to watch a leaf being blown here and there by the wind, or a cloud being similarly blown, or a cow grazing in the pasture, or a bird on a telegraph wire, or a crow on a tree-top, all of which he assured me reminded him of life.

In the first place I didn't say I was bound for Africa. I merely told the old man I had secured a position upon a well-known New York newspaper and felt thoroughly capable of supporting my wife and myself. I said nothing about this miserable boarding-house, or of the weeks of anxiety I have spent in that most hope-

less and fruitless of all tasks—making applications at newspaper offices. I said nothing of how in a thoughtless, foolhardy moment I left the bank because of its monotony, because two and two had an exasperating inveterate habit of making four. I did not tell him of the many sleepless nights I spent after leaving the dreary bank, or of how Alice tried to be cheerful despite her worry and the landlady's threats. Instead of this, I said, indifferently: "I am to become a journalist," trying by my careless, pompous manner to give him the idea that being a journalist meant riches, ease, and comfort for the rest of my life.

When I reached home to-night Alice asked the result of my interview. I told her the old man had disinherited me for the fourth and, as he solemnly vowed, the last time. Alice doesn't know the cause of the disinheritance and never will. She doesn't know he said he would never see me again when he first heard of my marriage, or that my love for her is the cause of my approach to beggary. Nor is she aware that at last, after months of waiting, I have joined a newspaper staff. My friends say there's many a

slip 'twixt a newspaper's offer and a positive engagement, so I shall not tell her until I am certain of my position. To-morrow I am to see the editor-in-chief, and, according to his promise, begin work at once. It may be as well to mention here that my position was not obtained by "making an application." I have never heard of a man who has obtained newspaper work by "making applications"—by leaving his name, address, and references in charge of an office boy.

*Jan. 17.*—To-morrow I shall be a journalist—a professional man. I like the sound of it—the well-known journalist, Mr. Samuel E. Forbes. Nice—very nice, indeed!

Not long ago, I went to hear a debate on the subject: Resolved: "Journalism is a profession; not a business." The result was a large affirmative vote. Robinson told me that most of those present were newspaper men and then laughed in an irritating way. But then he is prejudiced, for he says two of his wife's brothers write for the papers and he supports them.

I called at the office this afternoon and finally saw the Editor-in-chief. On my arrival an im-

pertinent fellow asked, brusquely: "What's your business?" Whereat I felt inclined to tell him I was calling with regard to a very important and confidential matter which was not meant for his ears just to wound his insufferable haughtiness, but I thought he must be one of the editorial staff, so I meekly wrote my name on a card he threw at me. He came back in a few minutes and told me to take a seat and wait. I suppose Mr. Supremity had told him of my engagement, for his manner was more friendly than at first. I took a seat and kept it. Then for an hour I rested tranquilly in the belief that the Editor-in-chief was busily at work deciding just what position to give me.

At last Mr. Supremity appeared, but bless me if he didn't walk by with never a word nor a sign of recognition! Then I coughed one of those hideous artificial coughs to attract his attention and he returned. I wondered what decision he had reached.

"This is Mr. Forbes, is it not?" he asked, as if he had never seen me before.

"Yes, Mr. Supremity," said I, salaaming low, "Mr. Forbes, sir."

"You must have been waiting here some time," said he, but I assured him I had only been there two or three minutes. "To tell the truth," he went on, "I had quite forgotten you were here. Let me see. You are going on the City Staff. All right, Mr. Forbes, come this way and I'll introduce you to the City Editor."

I had no idea what the City Staff was and don't know yet, but I shall be on it to-morrow. The Editor-in-chief led the way to a large desk at one end of the room.

"Mr. Ripley, this is Mr. Forbes," he observed to a man seated at the desk. I bowed and said: "Glad to meet you," whereupon the man at the desk looked up from a paper he was reading, nodded, and went on reading. "Mr. Ripley is the City Editor. He will tell you when to come again and what to do," said Supremity, turning to me. Then he looked at the City Editor. "Mr. Forbes looks strong; he will doubtless be of some use." Ripley looked almost happy when he noticed my athletic appearance. Now I cannot see why an athlete should be especially "useful" as a journalist. I expected the City Editor would demand of me a

specimen article on politics, art, music, or some other subject of interest, but he didn't. He merely said: "Good night, Mr. Forbes. Come in at eleven to-morrow morning." I wanted to ask him several questions, but he began to cut up a newspaper with a long pair of shears and seemed to forget I was there. I left.

I stopped in to see Robinson on my way home to tell him the good news.

"Well, Jack," I said, good-naturedly. "Well, Jack." Then I offered him a cigar—an unusual proceeding on my part. He seemed surprised, but took it and asked for a match. His motto is: "Find the good traits in a man and then draw them out."

After lighting the cigar he said: "Sam, you have a way of saying: 'Well Jack,' and nothing more. You're spendthrift with words, but I suppose it's a sign you are feeling in good spirits, so I can't blame you. What's new?"

"Well, Jack——"

"There you go again," he broke in. Now I knew my success in obtaining a foothold in the world of journalism would surprise him, so, curbing my enthusiasm, and, knocking the ashes off

my cigar with great nonchalance, I said: "To-morrow I am to be a journalist."

"What paper are you going on?" he asked, unconcernedly. He didn't seem at all pleased on hearing of my good fortune, and this made me somewhat angry.

"*The Daily Bread*," I answered.

"To spend your life manufacturing copy!" he exclaimed, dolefully.

"What is *copy*?" I queried.

"Inky paper, about to become inky type," answered the cynic, "and journalism, after all, is only copy-making. Sam Forbes, a reporter!" he continued, as if the thought grieved him.

"A journalist!" I exclaimed hotly.

"A reporter!" he laughed.

"A journalist!" I growled.

"Well, I'll compromise and call you a newspaper man, but you're undoubtedly to be a reporter."

"You are wrong," I said, with much dignity; "I am not to be a reporter." He wanted to know if I was going to be an office boy, and said the positions of reporter and office boy were the only ones on a newspaper ever known to be va-



cant. I felt sure he would open his eyes very wide when I said : "I am to be a member of the City Staff," but he didn't. He leaned back in his chair and laughed heartily. This aroused my anger again, and I said something about caddishness and left him. As I went out he told me to call again to-morrow evening and I, too, would probably feel like laughing.

My wife received the news of my engagement more satisfactorily than Robinson. She usually sees things in their right light—not always, of course—but usually. This time she did.

"I am tremendously glad, Sam," she said. "Just think of your being a journalist—a real literary man ! No more big envelopes coming back full of rejected manuscripts ! Just think," she went on, enthusiastically, "Everything you write will be accepted !"

"Yes, Alice," I replied, as if that were nothing out of the ordinary, "and no more bank monotony."

"What kind of articles are you to write ?"

"Oh, I don't know yet, but I am on the City Staff," I declared, leaning back indifferently, as though being on the City Staff were not especially important.

"On the City Staff," she cried, clapping her hands.

"The City Staff," I echoed.

"I hope that means you won't have to leave town. I've heard that newspaper men are often sent all over the country at five minutes' notice. What staff are they on?"

"They are on—on the—I suppose they are on the Out-of-town Staff," I answered.

"Yes ; they must be," she returned, instantly seeing the good sense of my suggestion. I like to be agreed with. Robinson would probably have laughed. Sometimes I dislike Robinson.

"I suppose you will get a good salary," Alice observed, thoughtfully. I told her it would not be large, but she was not satisfied, and asked how much they were going to pay me. I said I didn't know exactly. That was true. I don't think a man should be very enthusiastic about his salary when talking to his wife. I soon noticed there was something on her mind, and presently she said, in a quiet voice: "I do hope we can afford to buy a sofa soon, Sam. This room is bare without one." I surveyed our sitting-room, in which there are three chairs and a table, not to

mention a piano-stool without a piano. The room was certainly rather empty, but I wanted to be cautious, so I told Alice we must not be too luxurious at first. Of course, after I am well known as a journalist we shall have our sofas and other little extravagances, perhaps even a piano for that piano-stool. She hasn't said anything more about the sofa this evening. She's a thoughtful little woman.

The lamp, near which I am sitting, seems vexed at being kept up so late. It is in a melancholy mood. The wick is down and the flame out of sympathy is blue and down too. Soon the darkness will forbid more writing. I expect to be too busy to scribble in this journal every day, but I shall carry it with me and jot things down at odd moments.

There goes the lamp! It is almost out. I might as well turn it out entirely and then turn in myself. Good night, diary; you're the youngest kind of a youngster yet, but cheer up! You may live to a good old age. Who knows?

## CHAPTER II.

THE "DAILY BREAD" EDITORIAL ROOMS—I WRITE  
A "POOR STORY."

JANUARY 18.—I believe Robinson was right after all, and I am to be an ordinary reporter. I wrote something to-day, yet I don't feel justified in saying that my production was exactly an article. The City Editor spoke of it as a "poor story," but by this he didn't mean that it was really poor, or in any way unworthy of my literary ability. He called it "poor" because it was an account of the sufferings of a poor family.

I went to *The Daily Bread* office at the appointed hour this morning and found the City Editor already there. The room in which he sits, and over which he seems to preside, is near the top of *The Daily Bread* Building. It is on the fourteenth floor and there is but one story between it and the sky. As I opened the door bearing the announcement—"Daily Bread Editorial Rooms"—perhaps I did not fully realize that, besides nodding pleasantly to the young fellow I met yesterday, I was making my bow to the world of journalism.

I wish critical moments would march down the path of time with labels on them.

I sat down at one of the many small desks which are not unlike those I remember to have hated so cordially fifteen or twenty years ago at school. The City Editor soon called me and seemed glad I had come. He is a small man of about thirty-five. In a profound base voice he asked me if I had ever before worked for a newspaper, and upon hearing a regretful negative answer, he remarked: "Well, remember two things—turn in legible copy and stick to facts. Don't write poetry. That isn't what we want. It may be all right in its place, but what you will have to write is an accurate, terse story every time."

"Am I to write stories?" I asked in surprise, having visions of long serials or breezy sketches.

"Everything in the paper is a story," he answered, smiling. "A wedding is a story; so is a funeral. Have you lived long in New York?" I told him nearly all my life, and think he was pleased, as he did not look annoyed. I fancy he is more given to frowns than smiles. If he is pleased he does not show it, but if he is not

pleased he shows it very distinctly. Thus I gather that if he does not actually scowl and growl he is satisfied.

After telling me to come to the office in future at 12.30, at which hour most of the reporters arrive, Mr. Ripley observed: "I shall give you an easy assignment for a beginning." Then he showed me a letter from a poor family asking for assistance, and said: "Investigate this, Mr. Forbes."

I investigated.

Now my lodgings are not what they might be, but compared to the home of that poor family they are luxurious—in fact, palatial. My wife's mother has a way of saying that if So-and-so were someone else, So-and-so might be a much nicer person. That is all I can say of the street where the poor family live. Were it another street in another neighborhood, it might be less objectionable. It winds in and out far down town on the west side, crossing alleys here and avenues there, and bluntly bringing to the stranger who is unfortunate enough to meet it on its rambles, a large amount of varied unpleasantness. Anyone passing through A—— street should neither

saunter, nor breathe. He should walk fast, live in the past, and hold his breath. I inhaled the air once or twice, but soon left it to itself and lived upon the remembrance of atmosphere in a pleasanter neighborhood. I found the poor family in a half dark room at the end of an entirely dark hall-way in the basement of a house, the windows of which were covered with odd pieces of rag and newspaper to keep out the cold, the glass having long since departed.

Perhaps humanity would still survive if the poor family followed the window-panes into oblivion, and possibly the starvers would share the blessing with humanity. It's a question.

The only suggestion of plenty connected with the poor family was the poor family itself—four girls, one boy, husband, wife. There was not much in the cupboard. I noticed a half loaf of tough, dusty looking bread and a saucer of sugar, seemingly for no purpose, as there was nothing to be sweetened save the contents of a little flat brown bottle standing in one corner of the closet.

“Give the reporter-gentleman a seat,” said the mother to her son. The child got up with a

whine and offered me his own, namely the floor. I remained standing. He was either too tired or too lazy to go for the three-legged chair in the corner, so without needlessly prolonging the pleasures of my reception, I took out my brown writing-pad and asked more questions than those of a census-taker, concerning the name, nationality, occupation, religion, etc., of each member of the family. I jotted down the ready answers with a mechanism and lack of sympathy in my expression worthy of a doctor writing down symptoms, and this was some of the information I found on my pad after leaving the tenement:

“Husband—65 years old—Irish—no work. Wife—age refused—Irish. Has five children living and five dead—all Irish. Oldest living child—girl—10 years—sells matches when she can; when she can’t, stays home while mother tries to sell papers. Says matches sell better than papers. Mother says papers better than matches. Father says one as bad as other. Second child—aged 8—does nothing especial—used to take in washing before the neighbors felt too poor to have any washing done. Third child—girl—aged 6—also out of employment. Fourth child—4 years old



—wants work, but can't find it. Fifth child—infant—aged 2—also out of employment.

This was the poor family and, although I felt sorry for it after making the above inventory, I was a trifle more contented with life generally as I left A—— street.

I prefer to write for a paper rather than to sell it, and it is pleasanter to give away matches to Robinson than to vend them on the street. No; I am not sorry I made the acquaintance of the poor family. When I look at a man driving up-town in his private cab I decide it is a nuisance to walk, but when I see a man pushing a cartful of bananas up the avenue I realize it is pleasant to walk without bananas. It's a good plan to look at a pushcart now and then.

I returned to the office late in the afternoon and found the local room full of reporters. When I told Ripley about the poor family he asked me if I considered them worthy of help. I said yes, and thought it unnecessary to mention the little brown bottle, fearing it might prejudice him. He told me to write three or four "sticks" about them. I had no knowledge of "sticks" and didn't want to ask. For I have a peculiar objec-

tion to giving people the satisfaction of telling me anything I don't know. So I went over to the young man whom I had first met and observed in an off-hand way: "By the bye, I met a man yesterday who didn't know the meaning of a 'stick,' and he was an old reporter, what's more." Of course I thought the young fellow would answer: "Any newspaper man should know that a 'stick' is so and so," but he didn't. He merely laughed and made no comments. I tried again. "He must have been a strange sort of reporter not to know the meaning of 'stick.'" Then came the unexpected answer: "To tell the truth I have forgotten myself. How many lines are there in a 'stick'?" I saw I was in a dangerous predicament, but made my escape as best I could. "What," I asked, laughing, "don't *you* know?" Then I walked away to escape further questions. I asked the man at the desk next to mine and he told me. Afterward I found out that the fellow at the door was only an office boy, and this annoyed me extremely.

I had nearly finished my story when Ripley called me and commanded: "Make it pathetic, Mr. Forbes—a good description, you know—

woman sobbing piteously, etc." I read the story over and decided there was no pathos in it. Then I rewrote it. The City Editor went home at six o'clock, whereupon the seats were filled at a long table known as the Night City Desk. It is presided over by the Night Editor, to whom I handed my story. Shortly after six I asked Withers, the Assistant City Editor, if he knew of any work for me this evening. He put on a large pair of spectacles with wrought iron frames and opened a big book. Having a page marked: "January 18, evening assignments," he slowly drew his finger down the page over a list of reporters' names, and finally mumbled: "Nothing to-night."

I was about to leave for home, when I heard a voice from the Night City Desk calling me. I went back. Mr. Owl, the Night Editor, handed me my story and growled: "Try and straighten this out, Mr. Forbes. You've made a heavy tragedy of it."

"I was told to make it pathetic," I objected.

"There's no pathos in such stuff as this," he answered abruptly. I rewrote the story a second

time and was about to come home when Owl called me again. I went back.

"You have spelt the name of this firm wrong. Please look it up and change it." It was the name of the firm who had last employed the poor man. How in the world Owl found the error was a quandary. I asked another reporter about it. "Why, that man, Owl," said he, "is a human dictionary, directory, and encyclopedia, all in one." I corrected my copy and handed it back. I was just stepping into the elevator, which takes the *Daily Bread* Staff from the skies to Mother Earth, or vice versa, when a boy ran out and called: "Mr. Owl wants you." I went back.

"Mr. Forbes, after this," said the Night Editor, "please ask me if you have a night assignment, before going home." I told him I had already found there was none. "That makes no difference," he answered, "I may have something for you to do."

"Have you?" I asked.

"No," he replied, and then began writing all over a sheet of my copy with a blue pencil. He has a concise way of saying things; his words flash.

I've been talking things over with Alice this evening.

"What did you write about? How'd you like it?" were a couple of the questions she greeted me with on my return. She says she can hardly wait until morning to buy *The Daily Bread*, and read my "article," as she persists in calling it. I shall wait until I get down to the office before I read the paper. Perhaps I shall not remember to look for the story at all. I have heard that many reporters never take the trouble to read their work after it is printed.

### CHAPTER III.

THE MORNING AFTER—FOSSILIZED ANTIQUARIANS  
—REAL ESTATE IN THE GARDEN OF EDEN—  
MY “DAY OFF”—THIS WEEK’S “WILLIAM.”

JANUARY 19.—I have ten or fifteen minutes to spare before going to the office.

Alice was somewhat excited this morning; when I awoke she was nowhere to be seen. Soon she came in, however, having on her bonnet and being quite out of breath. There was a newspaper under her arm.

“Where have you been?” I asked, sleepily.

“Around the corner, to buy *The Daily Bread*. Then she sat down without waiting to take off her bonnet and arrange her hair, as is her usual custom, and began eagerly to turn over the pages. “What kind of a heading was there over it?” she asked. I told her I had no idea, as the headings were written by the copy-readers at one of the night desks.

“How much did you write?”

“About a quarter of a column.”

“Well,” she exclaimed despondently, after

looking through the paper half a dozen times, "I can't find it." I decided it was late enough to come forth from under the counterpane smiling indulgently at her inexperience in finding newspaper articles. Then I carefully and confidently turned over the pages while she looked over my shoulder.

The mercury in our thermometer usually hovers near the freezing mark at early morn, but at about 9 o'clock it suddenly ascends. This is because the landlady persists in having the furnace fire put out in the evening for fear the house, which isn't insured, will burn up during the night, and not having it relighted until after breakfast. At 7 A. M. we keep all the windows closed, and bundle up in rugs, and even then we shiver. At 9 A. M., we throw off the rugs, open the windows and look for fans. This is after there's a fire in the furnace. None but New Yorkers and Bostonians can survive these sudden changes of temperature in our boarding-house. As I awake each morning I feel like a fowl in a refrigerator waiting to be roasted. After breakfast I am in the oven. Our room was frigid when I began the search for the poor story. The only clothes

I wore were my pajamas and a coat of frost, but the more I shivered the more determined to find that article I became. The clamorous, loud-tongued breakfast bell soon sounded. This is Wednesday, and on Wednesday mornings we have English water muffins for breakfast. We are usually downstairs early so as to have hot muffins. Heat affects English water muffins as it does air. It lessens their specific gravity, but we forgot the scientific principle this morning and ate our muffins cold—oh, so cold and heavy! Yet we found my story. After systematically scanning every column on every page we saw the name of the poor family. There were but five or six lines about them. Now I don't see why it was so abridged unless it was considered unimportant, and if that was the case, why in the world should I not have been told before I wrote nearly a quarter of a column? Alice seemed disappointed.

*Jan. 21.*—Yesterday's page in my diary is blank. Blanks, as a rule, imply quantity. This one records much work. I went to the office at 12.30 yesterday, and came home at 3 o'clock this morning. In the afternoon I went to a meeting



of the Primeval Society—a body of fossilized antiquarians who spend more time roaming blindly through antediluvian forests in books and discoursing upon the lack of life in the Paleozoic Period than in reading the news of the day and putting their shoulders to this little sphere for an aid in rolling it up hill.

I often wish I had shared real estate in the Garden of Eden with Adam, and this is not only on account of its freedom from taxation. Living in a boarding-house, I am not troubled with real estate taxes. No; it is because there were no ancient histories to annoy one. There were no strange-looking individuals growing rusty and mildewy from the study of former times. True, this was wholly due to a scarcity in the supply of “former times.” If there had been olden days, some one would have studied them.

New York is enterprising, but I consider Eden far more modern for its era. There were no old fashions to worry the woman and no ancient jests to bore the man. There were no old families unable to afford any clothes save coats-of-arms. There were many trees in the Garden, but no family trees with haughty ancestral branches

casting scornful shadows over little trees with no branches.

After reporting the meeting of the Primeval Society I thought I should be able to come home, but I was much mistaken. I went to a concert in the evening and wrote a couple of "sticks" about it. At midnight one of the press associations sent in a notice that some man had shot himself in Harlem, and Owl sent me to see about it. I went up and found that instead of shooting himself the man had fallen downstairs and was in a hospital two or three miles away. I hurried to the hospital and was told that the man only had a slight headache. It was nearly 2 A.M. when I arrived at the office after gaining this information, and the first edition was already printed. When I told Owl what I had ascertained, he said it wasn't worth a single line, and yet I had been all over town and had spent the best part of two hours investigating it.

*Jan. 22.*—I am in a hurry and a cable-car, which is an unpleasant position, for the two are not on good terms with each other. I find it somewhat difficult to preserve my own equilibrium, to say naught of my pencil's. Hence no more at present.

*Jan. 24.*—Each reporter has one day in the week “off,” and to-day is mine. Therefore I have time to write a good deal in my diary to-day, but for that reason I shall not do so. When I have time for action I seldom act, yet when there is no time to spare, I invariably spare the time.

To-day I am in the mood for the easy-chair, my pipe, and a talk with Alice. My pen has been near me so much of late that I shall be glad to part company with it for a few hours. There’s the easy-chair and here comes Alice. Where’s my pipe?

*Jan. 25.*—Very busy to-day.

*Jan. 26.*—Haven’t a minute, even for eating.

*Jan. 27.*—Am “on the rush.”

*Jan. 28.*—The life of a reporter solves the perpetual motion problem.

*Jan. 29.*—In the newspaper business every day should be a week.

*Jan. 31.*—I am not sorry my “day off” has come around again. It will always be welcome. During the past week (which, by the way, has gone quicker than any previous week I remember), I met most of the City Staff, besides one or

two of the leader writers and department editors. A reporter, who, by the way, has a wondrous fondness for repartee and wine, said to me last Thursday: "Have you handed in this week's William yet?" I could not imagine what he meant by "William," but said I hadn't handed it in. "They like to have it early," he remarked, thereby greatly disturbing my peace of mind. I feared I might get into trouble if I delayed in presenting this week's "William" to somebody, so I decided to chat with a diminutive office boy, who was seated not far away devouring a sandwich and a piece of pie. I gave him a cigarette, and asked him the meaning of a "William."

"A William!" he exclaimed, looking up from the pie. "Wottell; I d'no."

"What in the name of all that is mysterious can it be?" I went on in deep thought. Then I heard a stifled sound of choking from the office boy. He was vainly endeavoring to suppress his mirth and pie crust at the same time, and before long he partially succeeded.

"You ain't got de brains of a grasshopper," he informed me. "What's the nickname for 'William?'"



"You ain't got de brains of a grasshopper," he informed me.  
—Page 36.



"Will," I answered.

"Another?" he said.

"Willie," I told him in surprise.

"Another nickname?" he demanded, fiercely.

I told him I didn't know of any more, and he plainly showed his annoyance.

"What's de landlaidy give yer when yer pay yer board?" he asked, gesticulating excitedly with the hand that held the remaining pie.

"A receipt," I answered.

"Nit!" he returned, in a weary tone. "What's she give yer before yer pay de board?"

"Usually Hail Columbia," I replied. Then I thought he was going to lose his hold on the pie, but, happily for me, he managed to keep both his meal and his temper.

"She gives yer a bill; that what she gives yer. This week's William is this week's bill, ain't it?"

I neither smiled nor answered. I quietly went over to the file of daily papers and read two or three columns of obituaries. But I handed in my bill, and received my first week's salary the next day.

## CHAPTER IV.

MR. SCRABBLES—PIE AT 3 A. M.—WOMEN, CIDER,  
AND OTHER ECCENTRICITIES.

FEBRUARY 1.—Someone has said: "There are two classes of human beings in the world—men and journalists." By nature I am still of the former class, and, although I have been on *The Daily Bread* for a fortnight or more, I am still an ordinary man. Yes, I have been there long enough to know that some men are journalists by birth, and, though none of these were born with the proverbial silver spoons in their mouths, they probably had pencils in their hands. Their natures carry them to the newspaper office when they are little more than boys, and here leave them until age comes with dismissal, poverty, and their best blessing—death. One man, whom I feel sure must have been fonder of ink than milk, even in his early infancy, is Scrabbles. I like Scrabbles, for I feel sure he has always been Scrabbles, and will be no one else to his dying day. We took supper together at one of the many Park Row restaurants just after the paper had gone to press



this morning. The coffee-houses near Printing House Square serve humble meals at prices and hours the smallest.

"What'll you have?" the waiter asked Scrabbles, after we had seated ourselves at one of the numerous long tables.

"Same as always," answered Scrabbles, pushing his hat back and glancing over his account of yesterday's big fire. This is one of Scrabbles's favorite expressions. When one asks him how he is when one meets him, he invariably answers: "Same as always;" or upon being asked with what manner of beverage he will regale himself, he is sure to reply without hesitancy: "Same as always," invariably meaning "Old Rye."

"What do you always have?" asked the waiter.

"I didn't notice you were a new one," returned Scrabbles. "A cup of coffee and a piece of pie."

"What kind of pie?" demanded the aproned autocrat.

"Any kind," answered Scrabbles, while I asked for the same. Now the waiter might have walked quietly over to the cook who was making a species of muffin, commonly known as "sinker,"

in the front window, and whispered: "Kindly draw two cups of coffee and cut two slices of the best pie we have on hand," but he didn't. Instead he called: "Draw two and cut two of what yer've got the most of for number 5." I clearly demonstrated to Scrabbles his lack of wisdom in leaving the choice of pie to the waiter, as that monarchical individual naturally ordered the species of which there was the greatest supply and therefore the least called for and desirable. But Scrabbles said it would be taking needless responsibility upon one's shoulders to ask for a certain kind.

He has been twenty-five years in the newspaper business and seems to drift through life forgetting yesterday and that there may be a tomorrow, surprised at nothing, reasonably contented, regarding what would be most men's hardships as his own pleasures, knowing as much as any modern historian concerning the events of the past quarter of a century, and looking upon nothing with the eye of a cynic, a pessimist, or an optimist, but merely with that of an indifferent spectator of life. He watches carefully the machinery that makes the world go, and records its

motions. I doubt, however, if ever he asks the child's question: "Why do the wheels go round?" He knows they rotate and this knowledge suffices him, but although, perhaps, their movement pleases him somewhat I do not believe he would care much if they stopped altogether.

The other day I asked him what he would find to do in the next world, and he answered with that drawl of his: "Well, I've been a court reporter for a good long time; if there is any next world, I shall stick to the rut and be a recording angel." He has been in nearly every corner of the world and seen all sides of life; when I told him I was a novice in journalism he seemed glad to know me, but regarded me with some small commiseration. He says he started as an errand boy in a newspaper office years ago, and that early in his career he became a reporter. Not long ago he was made Managing Editor of a well-known daily. This evening I asked him why he gave up that position. "Because it gave me up," he answered, laughing. "The owners said I was behind the times, and put a younger man in my place. Perhaps I was too slow for them, but theirs is a sensational sheet and they knew I was

the cause of their losing several big stories. The stories were fakes trumped up by some of the reporters, and I knew it. One of the editors under me, who had influence with the proprietor, whispered that I was keeping news from the paper, and soon after that I was asked to resign. I suppose it was my fault, for I should have published the fakes."

Scrabbles doesn't seem to mind his hard fall from editorial work to reportorial, and the great decrease in salary attendant on it. As I said before, I like Scrabbles. He is not a married man, but when he heard me mention my wife he looked a trifle sympathetic, and remarked: "The editors will see more of you than your wife will. The newspaper business is a jealous god, or devil, whichever you choose to call it, and demands constant worship. This may be all right for the man—the divinity treats him fairly well—but it's hard for his wife if she's fond of him, which, however, I suppose she isn't, judging from the wives I've met."

"Mine seems to like me pretty well," I observed, smiling.

"How long have you been married?" he

queried. I told him, and he laughed knowingly. "A woman," said he, "is like cider—sweet when new, but growing harder the longer you keep her in your house."

"If you keep her in the cellar with the cider," I interrupted.

"There is no reason she should not be kept there. She likes cider. An apple caused her fall, you know." And this is the customary vexing manner in which Scrabbles avoids discussion. Now, if there's one thing I detest it's a poor joke, yet, as I said before, I like Scrabbles.

## CHAPTER V.

MR. RIPLEY, MERMAIDS, ETC.

FEBRUARY 2.—The City Editor reigns supreme in the local room, and, although one of his most humble subjects, I am by no means beneath his notice. A cat may look at a king, but the king shouldn't notice the cat. It would be unnecessary condescension on the sovereign's part, and might embarrass his feline courtier. My soul is often vexed by Mr. Ripley's glance, for I know it means a plentiful supply of assignments.

Last night I was troubled with insomnia and (to use another pre-historic joke of Scrabbles's) I couldn't sleep it off. For some time I lay awake and upbraided myself for that last cup of coffee, but at last I remembered the old plan of working out problems. I used to be well acquainted with figures and have not yet forgotten their wily combinations. I called them to me and asked how many hours I had worked during the past week. After they answered I fell asleep and dreamed I had seen Alice for five minutes in six days. Dreams are absurd exaggerations. I see

Alice ten or fifteen minutes every day, but I believe Scrabbles was right. For several years journalism has been my ideal profession. Is it to fall down and break in a thousand pieces as all the rest of my ideals have fallen? I hope not and yet, after but a few days of newspaper life, I am beginning to tire of it. I left the bank because of its monotony. I should like to leave the paper on account of its maddening variety. Too much variety becomes monotonous.

In the old childish days I used to devote hour after hour to mimic architecture, and yet it was not the small toy houses that I built which pleased me. It was the small toy houses that I *intended* to build. I well remember how I used to lie awake after my aunt had tucked me in for the night, and decide whether to build a cathedral or a castle after breakfast the next day. I thought some of those three-sided blocks of mine would make the most majestic of spires, and that those carved pillars would form such a stately entrance. I could see the grand church and almost imagine it would really be of marble, with stained-glass windows, and chimes, and a splendor such as would put to shame St. Paul's and

the many others of which my aunt had shown me pictures. So I gave up the idea of building a castle, for I had no blocks to serve as turrets, and I felt that a turretless castle would be as unworthy of me as a puddingless dinner. In the morning I used to hurry through my breakfast, run off to my blocks, and begin building. After numerous partial successes and failures, mirth and petulance, I managed to construct rather a realistic-looking cathedral. Then I sat and gazed at it critically. That was my mistake. Pshaw ! those peaked, three-sided blocks didn't stand straight and in no way resembled spires. I remembered the cathedral I had planned and saw that the one before me lacked chimes and glass windows, but not to be daunted, I hurried downstairs and after many entreaties, succeeded in persuading the waitress to lend me the breakfast bell. Then I begged an empty horse-radish bottle from the cook. But, although I was an imaginative child, I could not make myself believe I heard the breakfast bell chiming from its position on the cathedral roof, and scheme as I would I could not see how to make stained-glass windows from the horse-radish bottle. Then the



imaginary edifice arose again before me and with a wave of my arm I knocked the blocks down in a heap and tried to be content with a log cabin. That night I would again build a cathedral with my imagination, and the next morning I would try to build it with blocks, only to destroy it again in disgust. It was the same nearly every day—a wondrous building in the air at night and a desolate ruin on the floor in the morning. It's the same now. The architecture of our ideals is as fruitless as was our block-building in the nursery years ago. Some say we should be content with possible log cabins and not worry ourselves with impossible cathedrals. They say we should not waste our time endeavoring to imagine we see stained-glass windows in horse-radish bottles, or hear chimes in breakfast bells. Yet perhaps these oft-repeated and vain attempts to realize our imaginary creations will teach us that realized ideals do not visit Mother Earth, and that we must go higher—a good deal higher—to find them.

After I graduated from blocks and the nursery I was still as much of an idealist as ever, only, of course, on a grander scale.

“Mermaids can’t wear our make of shoes, but you can,” so the horse-car advertisement informed me as I returned home last evening. I looked at the shoemaker’s placard with its yellow-haired, grass-hued mermaid rising from a sky-blue sea, and I thought of my boyhood’s days on the old Maine coast where I used to sit watching and waiting for mermaids. How I used to steal away from the old farm-house after tea, and scurry down the lane to the open gate, then through the little wood to the stone wall, over the wall and to the very edge of the open, rolling ocean, where my mermaids lived in watery palaces, only coming to the surface to save a shipwrecked sailor’s life, or to sing sweet songs and bring the mariners to them! Mermaids, dolphins, and sirens were all confused in my mind, but what matter? For I derived just as much pleasure from my walks up and down the pebbly beach in the moonlight, peering out over the waves for a tress of golden hair and straining my ears for sounds of mermaids’ voices, as if I had been most accurately versed in the traditions of the ancient sea-dogs. Sometimes when the moon shone very brightly and I sat perched upon the old wall, I would hear

a distant splash and see a dark object rise and fall far off on the water, and I was convinced it was a mermaid, but it was only a porpoise. The trouble was that the mermaids never came near enough for me to see their faces and speak to them. I often wondered what I should say if they did, and whether they would take me to live with them. Once old Jim Wright, the fisherman, told me mermaids never came to the surface unless mortals were drowning, and then they were sure to be on hand. His good wife smiled and said: "Oh, Jim!" but I didn't know why. One night there was a terrible storm, yet I had no fear. Ye gods! how it lightened and thundered and rained! How the huge waves rushed up over the wall and knocked down the great stones like so many ten-pins! And how they roared, as if they were giants about to devour me! Not far from where I stood, a long dock extended for some distance in the water. Fishermen used to moor boats there in fine weather, but the wharf was deserted that night. Out on the dock I walked to its edge, only stopping a minute to think before acting. I was a good swimmer and could go across the lake back

of our house, but my aunt had never let me try the ocean. She said it was "dangerous and treacherous." A great shower of spray blew in my face and the rain soaked me through and through.

"Mermaids don't mind rain, anyway," said I aloud, "and I suppose they live on spray. Besides," I whispered, "I don't believe they have aunts," and with that I should probably have jumped in (so wishful are men for the moon), had I not felt a strong pair of arms thrown around me and heard old Jim say, laughingly:

"I thought you'd be arter them mermaids and I followed you down here, youngster. Fine night for mermaids, isn't it?" Then he lifted me up and carried me to Aunt Anna, who, poor old lady, stood in the doorway shouting directions to the farm-hands as they hurried here and there getting their lanterns and horses to start out in search of me. She was not over cross that night, for Jim told her it was all his fault and she believed him.

It was our first deep sigh that banished the sprites of old who promised all good things, who waved little wands over us that caused us secretly

to go out to the woods and into the old barn lofts when we awoke to look for them. And because we found only birds in the woods and mice in the barns, we lost no faith, for we knew so well that birds and mice were often fairy princes. So we stayed and gazed thoughtfully at the mice in the far corners of the loft, wondering what manner of elves they were, and through the window we heard the birds singing and felt sure those were the songs of wood-nymphs and happy sprites.

Even now the song is here from different voice; the fays in new-made garment. Keep them here. Keep them here—for they are good. And the days come when longingly up and down the roads of life we walk, looking out over the great ocean of human natures for the ideal we never find. At times we think we have it, but it is only a sham like the deceptive porpoise of my boyhood.

And so I sing loud and long all hail to the gnomes and the mermaids, the sprites and nymphs, the fairies and elves!

All hail to the player who introduces us to impossible heroes and heroines that cause us to weep and smile and forget our downtown offices! And hail to the romancist who takes us through

Arcadian lands, bringing discussion among ourselves as to Penelope's object in marrying Montague and not Charles, or causing us to wonder until the last chapter if Penelope is her mother's daughter or only her mother's niece, and making us glad and satisfied and smiling when, in the last paragraph of the book, Penelope's identity is established beyond the shadow of a doubt by a mysterious personal in *The Daily Bread*. Thanks—a thousand thanks—to you, Penelope, and your lovers in all their piteous plights, snarled motives, and identities, for making us forget that we have an unusually long and dry story to write for to-morrow's paper, or that we overdrew our bank account this morning, and that we are a long, long distance below the sky.

So sing praise to the block cathedrals and mermaids of our childhood, those kind parents of Fantasy mature!

## CHAPTER VI.

### THE SNAIL SUPPER.

**F**EBRUARY 4.—Yesterday I found in my mail-box at the office the following note written on a half sheet of brown copy paper:

DEAR FORBES: There is to be a snail supper at Zan-zetti's to-night after the paper goes to press. I hope you will come. Yours,

SCRABBLES.

Finding Scrabbles later in the day hard at work upon a political story I accepted his invitation with inquiry as to the significance of a "snail supper."

"It's to be given by a little club to which I belong," he answered, "and which I should be glad to have you join. Several of the staff are members. We give a supper once or twice a month and take turns ordering. At every meeting there's some special dish as a feature. For to-night snails have been chosen by Mr. Tome, our literary editor. I suppose you've tried them?"

I acknowledged that I had not, but should be glad to have the chance.

“There will be about twenty of us,” said Scrabbles. “Drop in at Zanzetti’s at about 3.30 to-morrow morning and you’ll find us in the back dining-room.” Then he went on scribbling “political stuff,” as he called it.

At the hour named I opened the well-worn door of Zanzetti’s, which swings to and fro to welcome new arrivals or speed the parting guest in a squeaky voice of old age. There are few denizens of New York’s Bohemia who have not at some time in their lives visited this eating-house. The quaint old place stands in the basement of a small dingy-looking house not far from B——— Street, and not many rods from the East River. On one side of it there is a decayed wooden tenement with a Chinese laundry on the first floor, and a place where they advertise “Pool at  $2\frac{1}{2}$  cents a cue” in the basement. The other next-door neighbor is the subject of much unfavorable criticism among the tavern’s patrons. It is a new and lofty office building, which, towering skyward, looks down on its surroundings like a hard-working well-dressed financier among a group of idle and ill-clad Bohemians. The artists and others who frequent Zanzetti’s never tire of hurl-



ing vindictive epithets at the office building, and several, in moments of exceeding great wrath at the sight of its newness, have declared it ought to be torn down for the sake of preserving the fitness of things and the tale of by-gone days as told by the dingy molding landscape of B—— Street. But I have already seen “to let” signs on neighboring eating-houses and tenements, and our Real Estate Editor tells me nearly half the block has been sold to a rich corporation, so it is probable that Zanzetti’s will be torn down instead of the office building, and the faltering step of decrepit old age in B—— Street will soon have given place to the double-quick march of to-day’s commercial armies, which is the custom of faltering steps whether they will or no, not only in this thoroughfare, but the world over.

Yet once within Zanzetti’s portal, Zanzetti’s guest is glad. For he loves the two low-ceilinged dining-rooms, despite their every small decrepitude, for the same reason he loves his oldest coat in spite of its shine, its fringe at the sleeves, and the dust which has become part of it. Some vaguely remember when Zanzetti’s father was their host, but these are few, for he bade them good-night

for the last time over forty years ago. I have heard the story of that "good night." The contemporaries of Zanzetti, Sr., often tell it when in confidential moods. They tell of how one evening they stayed longer than usual and filled their glasses more frequently than was their custom, and of how toward morning Carrington, an artist, long since dead, held discussion with Zanzetti as to the origin of the host's oldest and most beloved painting, which Carrington declared was by one man and Zanzetti swore was by another, and they tell of how both men became angry, the one on account of too much wine and the other because his word was doubted, and of how in an outburst of temper Carrington flung a bottle at his host. They tell also of how they hurried from the place, and assure the listener that Zanzetti bade them good-night and declared himself but little hurt. Then they tell of how when a week later they went to Zanzetti's they were greeted by the old man's son, who said his father was dead. And they tell with many words of their great surprise and sorrow at hearing the news. This is one of the many traditions a man hears after a few evenings spent at the little

eating-house. Yes; one has a way of spending the evening there, and makes no haste to leave. For friends come in at all hours of the night, and to their songs and stories he listens, pleased, singing and telling tales in his turn.

And so the hours slip by at Zanzetti's faster than elsewhere, and the revelers grow weary only when dawn reaches them through the shutters, when the smoke of pipes and strong cigars, hanging in clouds around them, becomes unbearable, even to their leathern lungs. But I usually go before dawn, otherwise I am at odds with the world a week. The others either don't have headaches or don't object to them. To-day Alice assures me I am cross and bearish. If she's right it's because I broke my rule and spent nearly all the small hours and several of the larger ones at Zanzetti's this morning. But I would do the same thing over again. Even to have had my salary raised I would not have missed the supper of snails, and that's saying a good deal.

Mr. Tome presided. He was far more in keeping with the ancient aspect of the dining-room than were most of us. It seemed as though he might have just stepped from one of the faded

old pictures of ancient stage-folk hanging on Zanzetti's walls, or from one of those old daguerreotypes we keep in our cupboards and resurrect once or twice in ten years when some distant relative comes to see us. Tome is a spidery-looking man, with round shoulders and very long arms, and is just the sort of individual to choose snails as a *piece de resistance*.

I sat next to Scrabbles. I had already met most of the guests, but the face I saw, over a broad expanse of napkin at the foot of the long table, was not familiar to me. I asked Scrabbles in a whisper to whom it belonged.

"That's Barrel, our musical critic. We call him 'Bar' for short. You see, it's a sort of double pun, a duplex musical and bibulous joke. Mr. Barrel, this is Mr. Forbes, a new member of our staff," called the reporter. The musical critic glanced up from some strange soup in which he was interested and said, in a voice suggesting the deepest note in a very base trombone, that he was glad to meet me. Then he became absorbed in the soup again.

"Some say he knows little or nothing about music," Scrabbles told me, in an undertone,

“while others believe he knows everything. He doesn’t seem to care much what people think of him. He’s sure to be in good spirits when he is not listening to an opera or concert. At such times, however, he is unbearably cross. He’s wholly contented only at meals. Do you notice how far he is obliged to sit from the table to get near to it?”

I did.

The rotundity of Mr. Barrel’s appearance is not unlike that which an inverted kettle-drum might present should it walk about on a couple of drum-sticks.

The climax of the supper was reached when Zanzetti brought in the snails. Barrel was the first to try them, while Tome nervously looked at him awaiting his opinion. At length the musical critic glanced up at Zanzetti, who was standing breathlessly beside him, and mumbled “Excellent!” Then, and not till then, Tome looked relieved.

“I move that some one offer a toast to Mr. Tome, who chose snails as to-night’s feature,” said a clean-shaven fellow who writes police news for *The Daily Bread*.

"No," bawled Barrel; "not now; the snails will get cold. Toasts afterward." The police reporter sat down quickly.

For a few minutes the conversation was general while we extricated the snails from their shells with the little one-pronged implements made for that purpose. Then it became evident that Mr. Crisp, a wiry, nervous-looking man who writes snappy editorials, wanted to make himself heard. He was talking in a high key to Tome, who had just observed that snails were his favorite dish.

"And so you chose them for all of us," said Crisp. "You catered to your own taste. Quite right! Very sensible! You are a book-worm. Now I want to ask if you don't agree with me when I say that if the cleverest literary chefs served for their own table instead of the public board, they would make better cooks?" Mr. Tome looked thoughtful. "A few have concocted literary dishes," Crisp went on, now satisfied that all were listening, "to suit their own fancy, and the public has eagerly devoured the productions and without knowing the consistency of its meal has smacked its lips and called for more."

"True, very true!" broke in the musical critic. "Some one says the secret of good cooking is to disguise dishes so no one can recognize them. Pass me the chianti, please."

"There's a good deal in that," said Scrabbles complacently. "When I dine at one of the French or Italian restaurants downtown, I invariably order a dish with a name requiring three lines on the bill of fare to hold it. It pleases me more than if I merely asked for chops or steak, and yet, for all I know, it is one or the other traveling incognito."

"Very natural," returned the writer of snappy editorials, not wishing to lose his share in the conversation. "Take Browning, Ibsen, Maeterlinck, Whitman, young Stephen Crane, for instance—I suppose much of their work seems tomfoolery, even to you, Tome. They have veiled their meaning even as Zanzetti conceals the identity of my orders with strange sauces and tangled names."

"Yes," said Scrabbles, helping himself to more snails, "I like Whitman and French menus, with a slight preference for the latter."

Then it became obvious that the smooth-faced police reporter had something to say.

"I think," he began, resolutely, "that the verses published in the poem corner of *The Evening Breeze* are as clever as anything Browning ever wrote. They are more up to date." At this Tome looked with commiseration at the police reporter.

"But then," retorted he, pityingly, "you eat chops and call them chops."

At this the police reporter looked crestfallen and didn't deny the charge. "You go to the other extreme," he muttered. "You would eat any manner of Chinese concoction so long as it bore a Celestial title and was not simply called 'household pets browned in the pan.'"

"Quite possible," assented Tome, smiling grimly.

Again the conversation became general, but as the Literary Editor presided, we all seemed to think it necessary to discuss what "Droch" terms "Bookishness." This tendency among the guests, however, evidently annoyed Tome and I fancied it would have pleased him more to talk of the latest bank robbery or the temperance question. Once he ventured to call across the table to Barrel: "How do you like Signor



Falsetto's 'Faust'?" but the musical critic looked so dark that the subject was quickly changed. At another time Tome asked the young police reporter if Joseph Sinister, more generally known as "Joe the Forger," had been captured, but the police reporter suddenly began to discuss the chianti's flavor with Barrel, so Tome gave up in despair.

"As I have said before," remarked the writer of snappy editorials, resuming the attack, "I think we rarely read the greatest thoughts of great authors." Some one asked why he thought so. "Because they are never written," he answered.

"By no means an original remark," muttered Tome between his teeth, adding defiantly: "Some people write a good deal deeper than they think."

"There lies the difference between a man of talent and one of genius," returned the writer of snappy editorials. "The genius has more thoughts than he can give us and the talented fellow gives us more thoughts than he has. It's the same in all branches of art. I leave it to you," he went on nodding to Dunscombe, the

Art Editor, who up to this time had said not more than three words and those at long intervals apart.

"True," observed Dunscombe. "The artist of genius knows how to paint better than he does paint, whereas the artist possessed of mere talent often paints better than he knows how."

"And it's the same in music," resumed Crisp, triumphantly. "Don't you agree, Mr. Barrel?"

The musical critic frowned and refilled his glass with chianti.

"There's no such thing as genius," he declared, whereat the Art Editor and Tome looked up from their snails in surprise and respectfully asked Barrel what he thought of the great musical masters of old.

"They were only made what we call men of genius by their names," said the musical critic.

"How did they make their names?" queried Crisp.

"They didn't. The public did that for them. It's the same with Tome's friends, the authors. The writer becomes a genius only through the kindly aid of the press, the public, and the publisher."

"Heresy!" exclaimed Tome.

"Yes; I can't agree," meekly observed the Art Editor.

"Same as always," whispered Scrabbles. "He never gives people what's due them. Barrel has owed me five for a month."

"Barrel is right," broke in the Wall street reporter, a neat-looking man with small black eyes.

"Everyone owes success to money."

"And nearly everyone owes money," interrupted Scrabbles with a sidelong glance at the musical critic.

"It rules our destiny," continued the Wall street man. "The Three Fates of to-day are respectively money, money, and money."

"A sweeping statement," exclaimed the writer of snappy editorials. "Riches make men great, but not great men."

"Well put!" assented Tome.

"Bring in the spaghetti!" roared Barrel to the host.

And the spaghetti was brought in.

Soon after this the quickly diminishing chianti began to have a soothing effect on all present, and even the writer of snappy editorials relapsed

into a comparative calm. A toast was offered to Tome by the police reporter who extolled the literary editor's choice of snails in glowing terms. Tome began his answer by saying he was overcome by our gratitude, but that really more thanks were due Zanzetti and Barrel, the founder of the Supper Club, and that he felt unworthy of the praise he had received. In concluding he said: "I have been taken so by surprise at being asked to respond to your toast that I have found it difficult to speak as I should have had I been prepared."

"It probably took him a week to compose that speech," whispered Scrabbles.

"I feel sure I am expressing the feelings of all," continued the Literary Editor, "by thanking Mr. Barrel for his interest—his great interest—in our club. We owe much to the fidelity of our president, who has never been known to miss a meeting, who has taken an active part at all our suppers, and who has proved himself not only a very capable critic of music, but also of the culinary art."

After this there was warm applause. Then the musical critic arose and said: "Gentlemen, this

club, of which I have the honor to be president, will always be regarded with sincere affection by me. Its suppers always lie near my heart." Here he paused to make sure we were all wreathed in smiles, and Scrabbles told me under his breath that the president had been guilty of that joke at three previous meetings.

Following the musical critic's rather lengthy response there was a good deal of promiscuous story-telling. It was daylight when I noticed Mr. Crisp's eye scrutinizing me. I feared I understood only too well the meaning of his gaze and was not very much surprised when he called: "Bring in your fiddle, Zanzetti. I propose a song from our guest, Mr. Forbes."

"Second the motion!" cried several.

"All in favor of this motion will say "ay," laughed Barrel.

"Ay," called all in chorus. Then I assured them with great earnestness that I had never sung a song in my life, that, in fact, I didn't know one note from another, that I would sing if I could, but I couldn't. These declarations made them even more eager. My utter inability evidently pleased them immensely.

"Sing something comic," said Scrabbles.

"A drinking song!" called Barrel.

"Anything!" cried several impatiently.

Then I tried to think of all the songs I had ever heard. I could remember two lines of the chorus of a comic piece and a half verse of a pathetic little ditty. I didn't think the two would go well together and besides I didn't remember the air of either. I never do remember airs. Then the names of other songs came back to me without words or music.

"Have you heard 'The Minstrel's Dream'?" I asked, trying to gain time.

"Never; let's have it," they all answered.

"*You* must know it," I said turning to Barrel. The musical critic solemnly vowed he had not, but that he wanted to very much.

"No," I said doubtfully, "it's not quite the thing. Let me see. Do you remember 'Little Lucy's Eyes'?"

Everyone declared they didn't recollect Lucy's eyes, and some one asked if they were blue or green. They said they would like to hear.

"No; I won't sing that," I said. "It's a lullaby."

"Just the thing. Sleep-songs are appropriate at this hour," exclaimed Scrabbles, telling me in an undertone that I would really better sing and not keep up that sort of thing very long. I don't see why a man who has never hummed an air in his life is invariably chosen as Lord Chief Songster on such occasions. I suppose it's because people love nothing better than to see others make fools of themselves. I told Zanzetti not to bother about any accompaniment and sang "Old Black Joe" to the tune of "Annie Laurie." Everyone surprised me by applauding heartily.

"That's something new, isn't it?" asked the writer of snappy editorials.

"I never heard it before," exclaimed Barrel.

"What's the name of it?" asked Tome. I looked from one to another and saw they were quite serious. My "originality of rendition," as the musical critic would say, had evidently deceived them.

"It's a little thing I picked up some time ago," I answered carelessly. Then I decided to have revenge, and suggested that we should be favored by Mr. Barrel.

"Bar can't sing," said Crisp, laughing. "We've tried him before."

And Barrel didn't.

Soon Tome turned to the police reporter and said, with an air of resignation to the inevitable: "I am sure Mr. Shackleton has written something for the occasion." No one seemed very anxious to know whether the police reporter had or not, and Scrabbles whispered to me that Shackleton had for several years been deluded by a belief in his poetic powers. The police reporter assured us that he had written no new poems, and everyone looked relieved.

"But," he said, blandly, "I have composed a little song in honor of the occasion which you might like to hear." Everyone looked bored again.

"Is there a chorus to it?" asked Tome.

"Yes; it's nearly all chorus," answered the police reporter. Then everyone looked happier and decided to try it.

"To what tune does it go?" asked Scrabbles.

"I—I don't know," faltered Shackleton. "I forgot there should be a tune to it." Scrabbles laughed and asked the police reporter to show him the words, whereupon the latter took several sheets from his pocket and said he had written a



dozen copies of the chorus, so we could all join in. Scrabbles read the song critically, and told Zanzetti to play some sort of a jig. The fiddler struck up a rollicking air while Scrabbles mumbled the words to himself and kept time with his hand.

"We may be able to sing it to that," he said at last. Shackleton looked relieved and sang the first verse, which, as nearly as I can remember, was as follows:

I now lift my voice and cheer our friends' choice  
As gayly the wine-glass I raise,  
To the snail, our late guest, now lying at rest,  
With loudly-sung anthems of praise.

We all applauded and joined in the refrain:

We now lift our voices to the best of all choices  
And sing a loud anthem of praise,  
And cry an "all hail" to the genial snail,  
An idle Bohemian creature,  
Who without recompense had the very good sense  
To officiate as to-night's feature.

The police reporter sang one or two more verses and then Tome arose, saying it was time for the Supper Club's usual good-night toast. We

all looked at our watches and agreed. Then  
Some sang to Zanzetti's accompaniment:

A toast to our host we offer in song  
As we fill up the glass to o'erflowing,  
A toast of good cheer and a merry career,  
A song of good wishes and thanks for his dishes,  
Life with no strife for him; cup ever full to brim  
With chianti, so mellow and glowing.

After this each one arose, and, lifting his glass,  
sang:

Our last toast we sing to Zanzetti,  
And wish him "good morn" by the gray light of dawn,  
As we quaff with a laugh our chianti;  
With thanks for our weal and our excellent meal,  
And above all the famous spaghetti,  
Now one and all we merrily call  
A toast to our host, Zanzetti.

Then the Supper Club went home.

## CHAPTER VII.

### A LAPSE IN THE RECORD.

FEBRUARY 4, 189.—I have treated you shabbily, diary, very shabbily. A whole year and never even a good morning to you! One would never imagine you were the only friend in whom I once confided freely. And yet I've had a good deal to tell you in the past twelve months. Take my moods to task for the neglect, diary. They've not happened to seek you. For moods are as changeable and fickle as the wind, and it has been an unfavorable wind for you lately, has it not? Being laid away and seemingly forgotten on the top shelf of my knick-knack cupboard could not have pleased you, but to tell the truth you are fortunate to have been taken down at all. When we are shelved, diary, as all of us must be sooner or later, there is a good chance of our staying where we are put. We become antiques, but we are not so much sought after by the world as inanimate specimens of antiquity—old laces, pottery, bric-a-brac, paintings, and other reminders of

bygone arts, for these are rare and ornamental, but antique humanity is neither one nor the other. The average man is readier to buy one of Washington's grandmother's chairs than to pay his own grandmother's rent.

I wish one might look back over his sayings to his friends as he may over his talks to his diary. I turn back to the pages of a twelvemonth ago and find that before I laid this book aside I was beginning to doubt the idealism of the newspaper life. The question no longer worries me. Gone are the chimeras—gone the disappointments—for journalism is the swiftest murderer of the ideal. Yet there seems to be a sort of dissatisfied contentment in the majority of newspaper men. For although there is a vast amount of work to be done at times, it is usually interesting, and then, my pay has been three times raised, a fact that does not annoy me. It's strange, however, that I don't feel much richer than when I was being paid one-fourth of my present salary. I suppose this is because I spend more than formerly. The newspapers put a good deal of money into reporters' pockets, but there always seem to be holes in the pockets, for the coins never stay

there. Receive and relieve, get paid and spend with a wonderful regularity, and the spending usually outbalances the receiving. We spend more than we make, we reporters. At one time I was really of a saving disposition, but the occupation makes the man, not the man the occupation, so, alack and alas, those days of thrift and frugality are passed and gone. If you will promise not to tell, I will whisper something to you, diary. We have not even bought the sofa yet. I decided to give it to Alice as a birthday present last spring, but I gave her a bunch of flowers instead. It was not because of any difference in price. I decided there was more sentiment attached to flowers than sofas. I thought of giving it to her for Christmas, but she said she wanted a pair of gloves, and I believe in giving useful presents—the things people really want. I gave her the gloves. I think I shall buy the sofa for her birthday this year.

I really can't see exactly where the money goes. Not long ago Alice suggested that I should keep a cash book. I tried it. For two days I knew in what direction every penny had departed, but I well remember the third night I

spent with that cash account. It was also the last. It was salary day, and I got home in time for tea, which, by the way, is a most unusual occurrence. I had paid one or two bills in the afternoon, but thought an evening at the theater would not be an extravagance. I usually take Alice to the play when I have a free evening on salary day.

After the theater we stopped for a bite of supper and then went home. I had been asleep for an hour or two when Alice awoke me, saying: "Sam, did you make out your accounts to-day?" I breathed as heavily as possible and tried to feign a deep sleep, but in vain. Alice persisted.

"What accounts?" I asked, yawning.

"Your cash account."

"No, my dear, I decided to wait until to-morrow morning." Then I heard the striking of a match, which to me is the most hideous of all sounds when it pierces the weary ear, arousing the mortal from his sleep in the first dark hours. It's a question which aggravates me more—the strike or the flame which follows it. One awakens the ears, the other the eyes.

"Where's the cash book?" Alice asked.

"Dashed if I know!" I answered, burying myself beneath pillows and blankets. But she found it.

"We had better go over it, Sam dear," she said. I came forth. After half an hour had passed I had entered every expenditure of the day just gone, which I could remember; but, of course, there was a difference in the balance.

"Think, Sam, and try to remember what you spent," Alice kept saying while I kept thinking. We went over every item I had entered, down the page, then up; then from the middle to both ends; then from both ends to the middle. Every penny that I could remember to have spent was there.

There is a vein in my nature, probably created in my banking days, which positively will not yield to the strategies of figures.

"Let's see," I kept saying, as with my head in my hands I pored over the open cash book. "I had \$60. I paid out"—then I mentioned every item in the list I had made. "I paid out exactly \$40. Here's a ten-dollar bill, two 'twos' and a 'one' and 85 cents. That makes \$15.85, and added to what I spent it amounts to \$55.85. Yes, I am \$4.15 short," I said, arriving at a con-

clusion I had reached half a dozen times by as many different methods of calculation. Then we wrote all the items down again on a separate piece of paper, copying them backward on the last page of the cash book, then forward on the next to the last page. Next I went back over the whole day, trying to remember every step I had taken from early morning until now.

Presently Alice exclaimed, eagerly: "I know!"

"What?" I asked.

"Didn't you tip the waiter after supper?"

"Yes," I answered, with a tired smile, as I added the tip to the list. "But that only accounts for 15 cents."

"Well, that's something, isn't it?" said Alice.

"Yes; that's something." We were then \$4 short. After this I got up every now and then and searched in my coat for the missing money, while Alice looked in every corner and crevice of the room into which a bill could possibly have gone.

After this sort of thing had gone on for some little time, Alice asked: "Are you sure you originally had \$60, Sam?"

That startled me. She said it so quickly. I



began to ask myself if I was certain about that \$60. Had I really had it in the first place? First I thought possibly I had had only \$59, then I fancied it might have been \$61. My brain became fatigued with so much fruitless work, but after a vast amount of thinking I decided as I had before without thinking at all. Sixty dollars was the original sum. I was \$4 short. Just \$4. For three-quarters of an hour we sat in deep, never-to-be-forgotten silence, the man in despair, the woman possibly in prayer.

Incidentally Alice picked up the coat I had searched many times just to explore its pockets once more. Suddenly she looked up and an expression of heavenly and sublime satisfaction passed over her face.

"Here it is!" she cried in delight, holding up the missing greenbacks.

"Where in the world did you find it?" I asked in bewilderment.

"In the left side pocket," she replied, tossing the bills toward me.

"Never before in my life have I put money in that pocket," I said, making the statement wonderfully impressive with a solemn vow and oath

never to do so again (the latter deserving especial mention for its emphasis).

"At any rate, I think it was worth the trouble to get the balance correct," remarked Alice.

"Yes; it was worth the candle, or rather a pint of oil and a foot of lamp-wick," I observed, picking up the rascally bills. "This \$4," I continued, holding them up, "owes me an apology." I proceeded to wrap up the notes more neatly, but after one glance at them as they lay in my hand, a faint feeling came over me, and I sank back in utter exhaustion.

"Heavens! what's the matter?" asked Alice, running over to where I sat.

"Look!" I gasped, holding up the bills before her anxious eyes. With a cry of horror she sank to the floor.

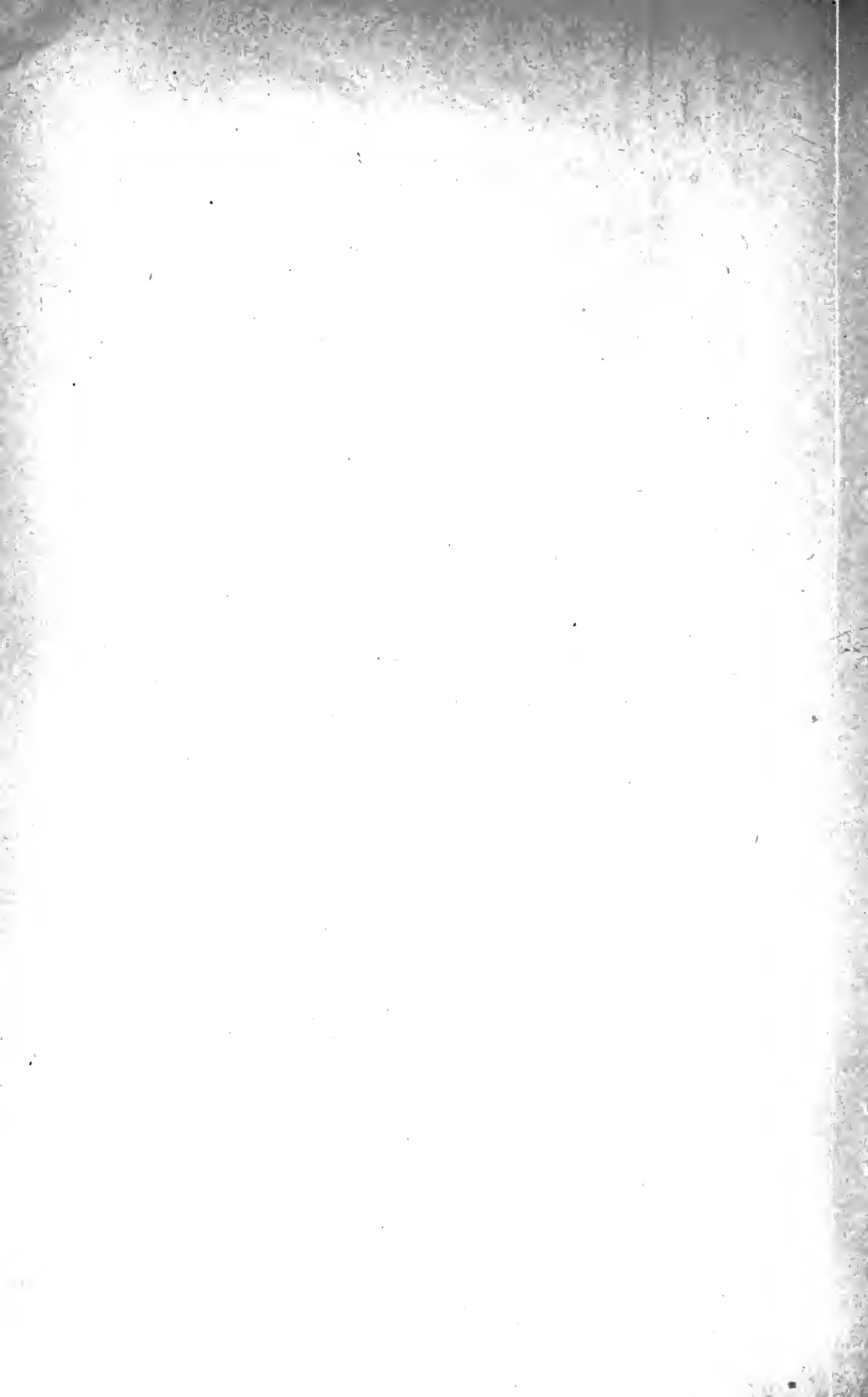
There were ten dollars instead of four!

For some time we remained unconscious, but at last I somewhat recovered from the shock and, despite my weakness, I seized the cash book and tore it page from page to shreds, and then shred from shred. I revived Alice and blew out the lamp. Then we tried to sleep, but vainly, for the day was fast breaking.



“Heavens ! what’s the matter ?” asked Alice.

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I have founded a literary society for the good of mankind. Its aim is high, its purpose noble. There are as yet only two members, but they have joined for life, and are devout and active and earnest in upholding the principles of the organization, which is to banish from the world a certain class of pernicious literature.

Long live the Society for the Suppression of  
Cash Books!

## CHAPTER VIII.

GERALD JENKINS ; HIS "APARTMENTS," ETC.—I  
BECOME THE "MAN OF LEISURE"—MR. VAN  
PUSH—I RESIGN IN FAVOR OF LAMBKIN.

FEBRUARY 5.—The City Editor called me to his desk this morning and surprised me with this question: "I say, Mr. Forbes, have you ever gone out in society at all?" Very much mystified, I assured him that I had not for several reasons—because I had never cared to, because society had never urged me, and because I had always considered society a very expensive and time-monopolizing luxury.

"Do you know any fashionable people?" was the next query. I answered that I had met a few through a third cousin of mine who, having made a big fortune out West in some business he never talked about very much, had come to New York and opened society's back door with nothing more nor less than a key of solid gold. Then Mr. Ripley said that he had asked me because he thought of giving me charge of the society department for a few weeks, as Gerald Jenkins, the society reporter, had suddenly been

taken ill. I know little or nothing about society reporting, but to please Ripley I said I would try it, and at once attempted to assume the air of a full-fledged scribbler of social happenings. This is no easy task. The air of a social chronicler is to be acquired only after a careful study of the original. The student will see that it is necessary to look as if he were possessed of great riches and spent them freely; as if he were only in the newspaper office for a pastime, and as though the sight of Park Row, with its cheap coffee-houses, its shouting hucksters, its hurrying crowds, its shrill-voiced newsboys, and its ceaseless tumult were above all things distasteful to him. This is the advice I give, judging from the ways of many society reporters I have seen, yet there are doubtless exceptions to this rule as to all others.

Ripley told me to call upon Jenkins and learn from him the "ins" and "outs" of society reporting. I shall do so to-night. As I have often said, the occupation makes the man. Since my talk with Ripley, I feel quite unlike the former Samuel E. Forbes. This was clearly demonstrated as I walked home this afternoon. I felt

that I must follow in the footsteps of Jenkins, and remembering his invariably immaculate appearance, I could not help thinking of the eighteen-months-old hat I was wearing, and of the old-style shortness of my overcoat. I have never carried a walking-stick, but the very heavy one with the crook at the end that Jenkins always has with him arose like a specter before me, and I soon found myself paying an almighty dollar for one of a similar weight and curve. My regeneration (or degeneration—which was it?) did not end with the purchase of the walking-stick. For I stopped in at a tailor's and priced overcoats of a fashionable cut. I wondered if Jenkins ever bargained with his tailors. No; probably not. I paid the first price asked, and then went and bought a silk hat, as Jenkins always wears one. When I brought all the purchases home and Alice saw them, she asked in mute astonishment whether I had suddenly made a fortune or gone crazy. I assured her that nothing of that sort had happened, but something almost as unexpected.

“Then you are to become a society man,” she said after hearing the news, hardly knowing whether to be glad or displeased.



"I suppose I am doomed to it for a time," I answered, also being uncertain as to the brightness of the prospect. Robinson, who dropped in later, looked very grave, and said with unmistakable sadness: "I had a brother who was once a society reporter, a make-believe fashionable man. Poor fellow! It was hard, very hard." This did not encourage me very much, and besides, not wishing to see Robinson so downcast, I changed the subject. Later I learned that the brother died of starvation, yet with gloves on! It's time to go and call on Jenkins.

*Feb. 6.*—I expected to find Jenkins living in fashionable bachelors' apartments, but as I made my way to his home last night I found myself walking through anything but an attractive part of Brooklyn.

Not far from the East River there is in the City of Churches a small, three-storied brick house, surrounded by stables, saloons, cheap grocery stores, and a few other old-fashioned and humble abodes. In a window on the first floor hangs the sign of a gentleman who advertises to extract teeth without pain at 50 cents each.

Upon looking at the window of the second story one sees a placard bearing the announcement:

MLLE. CASSIDY,  
ROBES ET MANTEAUX.

It was in this little boarding-house that I found Gerald Jenkins, Esq., society reporter for *The Daily Bread*. A maid of all work, wearing an appropriate head-dress of innumerable curl papers, opened the door for me after I had rung the bell untiringly for five minutes. I asked if I should send in my card.

"No; kape it," was the reply. "I guess ye can go roight up. It's on the top floor, back, ye'll be afther findin' Misther Jenkins."

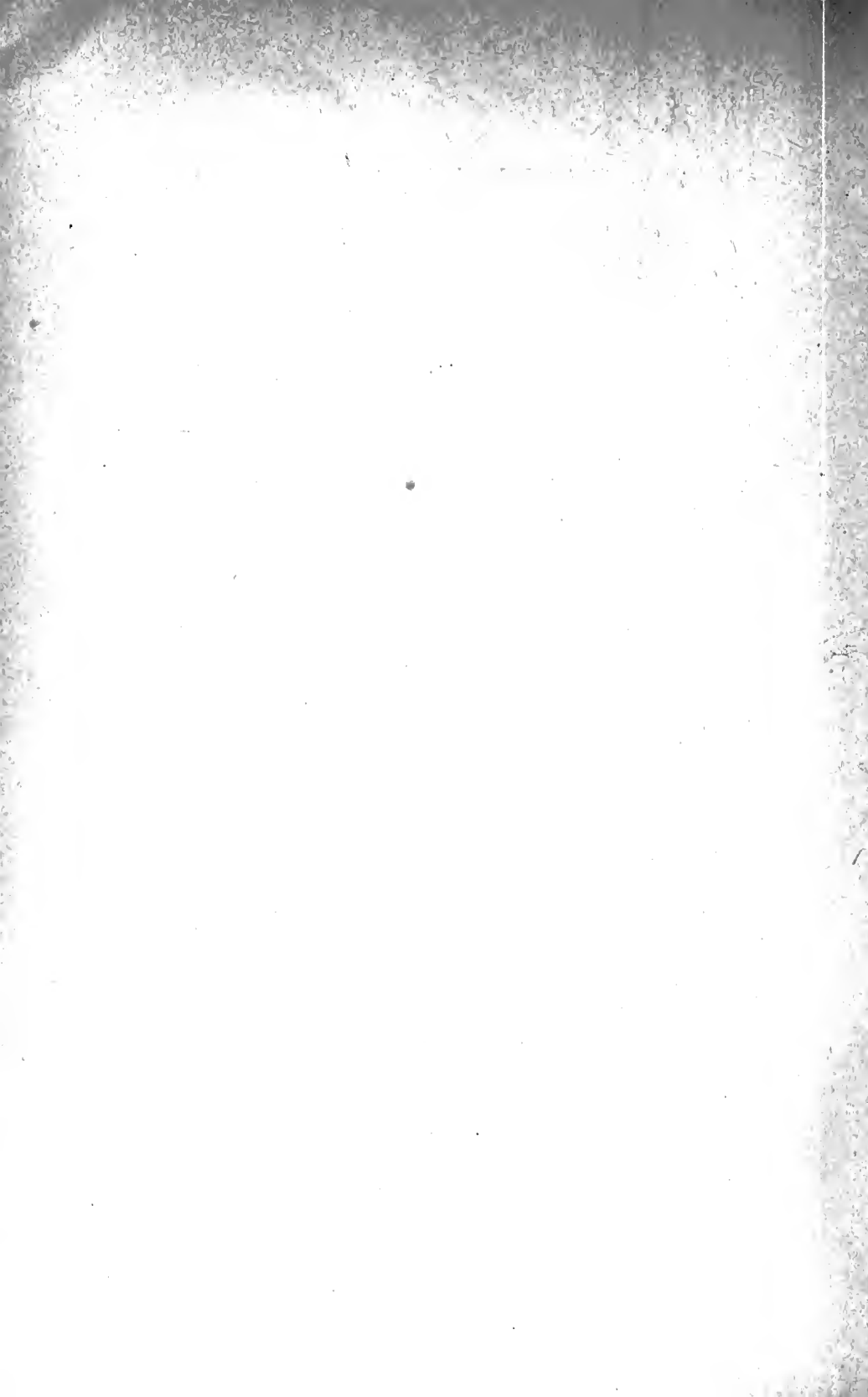
Through the half darkness I groped my way up the narrow staircase.

"Who's there?" asked a voice from the back room as I knocked on the door. I answered, and heard sounds of sudden activity within. "Just a minute!" called Jenkins. After waiting some time and listening to the scuffling of feet inside, I became impatient and called: "I have very little time to wait, Mr. Jenkins." Then the door was thrown open and the society reporter greeted me with: "I don't look fit to



I was shocked and grieved to see Jenkins thus.

—Page 87.



see any one. I didn't expect callers, you know. I hope you'll excuse my disheveled appearance."

I could hardly believe this was the Jenkins I had seen so often in the *Daily Bread* office. Upon hearing my knock he had evidently tried to regain his usual immaculacy, for even as he opened the door he held a carefully-folded coat in one hand and a dilapidated-looking hair-brush in the other. He had not been at work for a week, and had not shaved since his illness. The clothes he wore looked as though they were the relics of his early school days, his trousers hanging in a fringe above the ankles, and his sleeves not reaching far below the elbows. He looked about as prosperous as the average artist or musician who is the only man in the world that thinks he has talent and has not yet discovered his mistake. I was shocked and grieved to see Jenkins thus. It was the last small idol shattered.

There was a chair drawn close to the furnace register, and Jenkins offered it to me, saying, with a wave of his hand: "Have a seat, Mr. Forbes; have a seat." Then he drew up the only other chair in the room and offered me a

cigarette from a silver case which he took from the pocket of the folded coat. I told him I was to take his place during his absence, and asked his advice as to how to begin work.

"Well, of course, you must go out a great deal, you know," he said, after having again apologized for his unkempt appearance and his humble surroundings, which he said were due to a certain love he had for an occasional glimpse at Bohemia. "Quite a little fad of mine—living this way now and then. You know a good many fashionable people do it to break the monotony of social life."

I nodded, but could not help "smiling internally," as Scrabbles says.

"You will be kept very busy writing up the doings of the 'smart set'," he continued. "I am known in print as the 'Man of Leisure,' but I assure you no *nom de plume* could be a greater mockery. Man of Leisure indeed! Bah! I am rushed from morning till night going to teas, receptions, dinners, dances, and a thousand other entertainments!"

"But it must be very pleasant to be a guest at so many fashionable houses," I ventured.

"Yes, yes; not half bad, you know; not half bad *to be a guest*."

"I suppose, of course, you receive invitations for nearly everything?" I remarked just a trifle enviously.

"Of course, a great many," drawled the Man of Leisure. Then he changed the subject and told me it was whispered that Mrs. van Winthrop was about to sue for divorce, that it was rumored Mr. de Millions was going abroad to live; that it would not be at all surprising if Miss La Crème should break her engagement to young "Jack" Withers, because he had been seen walking in broad daylight with Myriam Merrigirl, of the London comic opera troupe, and that it was very possible—but no; I won't desecrate my diary with more of this gossip concerning people of whom I never heard until yesterday. After the Man of Leisure had recounted all this "really very interesting news," as he called it, he said with something of a *blasé* air: "And these are the people you must watch, don't you know. They are always doing something interesting, and you should have an exclusive story about one or the other of them every week. I used to."

"But how do you find out all these things?" I queried perplexedly.

"Oh, you go around and hear them."

"Around where?"

"Out in society, of course," answered the Man of Leisure, looking as though my questions were beginning to bore him.

When I left Jenkins I felt I knew less about society reporting than before I called upon him.

To-day at noon I shall throw off the cloak of the humble Bohemian, Samuel Forbes, which, by the way, is very old and threadbare, and don the faultless garments of the Man of Leisure. It will be a good plan, however, to keep "leisure" clothes for business only. On my days off I rather think I shall go back to the old coat. It's very comfortable, and Jenkins evidently wears comfortable togs now and then when he isn't "expecting callers."

*Feb. 7.*—This afternoon I went to four receptions, three weddings, two charity concerts, and one fashionable funeral. This evening—a dinner and two dances. Had various experiences at all the above entertainments—including the funeral. It is now to-morrow, as Scrabbles often says at



three o'clock in the morning, and I am suffering from utter exhaustion. Too weak to write more now.

*Feb. 8.*—Social hurry, flurry, worry, and rush all day and half to-night.

*Feb. 9.*—I prefer reporting prize-fights to afternoon teas. There seems to be less turmoil at the sporting events.

*Feb. 11.*—Two reports of engagements to substantiate, a rumor of divorce to prove false, and other pleasantries of this sort all day.

*Feb. 12.*—Have given up society reporting after a trial of four days and four nights.

I had a serious conversation with the City Editor this morning, and asked him as a special favor to put someone else in Jenkins' place. I said I should be far happier as an inveterate writer of obituaries, or even as an office boy, than in my present position. He laughed and asked me why. I told him it was all on account of that dinner given last night by Mr. van Push.

"Was it not a good one?" asked Ripley, with a twinkle in his eye.

"It may have been excellent," I returned.  
"I didn't try it."

"Then why didn't you like it?" I told him and he understood.

Late yesterday afternoon the following note was sent to the *Daily Bread* office:

SOCIETY EDITOR.

DEAR SIR: Will you come, or send another man up here, to report a large dinner I am to give this evening? By so doing you will very much oblige

Yours truly,

H. V. VAN PUSH  
(An old subscriber).

10,009 Fifth Avenue.

I had never heard of Mr. van Push, but Ripley said as there was nothing of importance going on I might as well go up and write a couple of sticks about the dinner to please the "old subscriber." "And, besides," Ripley had said, "there may be some big guns there."

Accordingly at seven o'clock I rang the bell of the van Push mansion on upper Fifth avenue.

"A *Daily Bread* reporter," I told the butler, who opened the door.

"Who is it you wish to see?" he asked.

"Mr. van Push," I answered.

"Step inside," said he, "and I'll see if he's

willing." I stepped inside, and in a few minutes, down the broad staircase walked the host.

"Come right in," he said, throwing open the drawing-room doors. "You're from *The Daily Bread*, ain't you?"

"Yes."

"Well, we're doing something big in the entertaining line to-night. Thought I'd like to see just a little account of it in your paper, you know—half a column or so."

I had grave misgivings about the half-column but did not say so. I began to think that Mr. van Push yearned more for society than society for Mr. van Push. At first sight I decided he was a small particle of that unpalatable part of the social pie known as the under crust. But he was hospitable to me, and I am the last man in the world to think the less of him for his outside position. I blame him only because he is not content to be looked upon as crust. Mr. van Push would make an admirable dragoon. I fancied he would have been more in his element wearing a helmet, a roughly-made uniform, and talking to horses and grooms, than appearing in evening dress which, despite its excellent cut, made him look uncom-

fortable, and striving to speak in lordly tones to a butler who seemed far more at ease than his master.

"Come in and see the table," said Mr. van Push ushering me through what he called the "saloon." "It's my wife's idea having the roses fixed that way." Then he picked up one of the elaborately emblazoned dinner cards, saying, proudly: "Here's one of the *meenus*! I arranged these myself. You might mention that in *The Daily Bread*." At this he made sure no one was listening, and whispered: "My wife wanted to arrange these, too, but I said, 'No, Eliza, you stick to the floral decorations. Roses are in your domain. I am going to have a finger in this pie.' Here are the names of the fashionable people who are coming," he said, handing me a list of guests typewritten on the letter paper of "van Push & Co., importers of fine whiskies and cigars." The name of a count of whom I had never heard headed the list, and then came those of a varied party, none of which I remembered to have seen in social directories.

"It's the right thing to tell what kind of dresses the ladies wear, ain't it?" asked Mr. van Push. I said *The Daily Bread* had printed

such descriptions after Assembly Balls, and on certain other occasions.

"Then, of course, you'll want to know about them," he returned. I wondered if he saw me smile, and just to please him said I should be very glad to know about the gowns. He looked perplexed and a little embarrassed for a minute, then he offered me a glass of port. "I don't quite know how to manage it," he said. "Of course, I don't suppose you're over anxious to meet the ladies, and besides it wouldn't exactly do to have me introduce you to one and then for you to whip out your note-book and jot down a description of her dress. There's only one way I know of," he went on, filling my glass again. "You might—that is—if you—didn't mind, of course,—it would be a good plan if you would come in here, leave the door a little ajar, and take a view of everyone while we are eating." He opened the door of one of the dining-room closets with a key and apologies. I did not think the situation a very pleasant one, but deciding it would be an experience, I yielded.

Just at that minute the door bell rang and the butler announced one of the guests.

“Is Mrs. van Push down yet?” asked the host, nervously. Being answered in the affirmative, he observed: “Well, I guess those two can amuse each other in the parlor while I make you comfortable, Mr. Forbes.” Then he gave me a diagram of the table with the position of each guest marked thereon.

“How soon shall I be able to get out of here?” I faltered.

“I never thought of that. Oh, I guess you can walk out as soon as you like. The people will think you’re only the butler’s assistant, or some one like that. To make ’em think so, I can say to you when you come from the closet: ‘Pass the champagne, James,’ or some such tomfoolery. You wouldn’t mind that, would you?”

I said I thought such an affair would be very amusing and entertaining, especially for him, and upbraided myself for the lack of moral courage which made me stay in the house another minute. I was pleasing a good-hearted idiot, however, and “having an experience,” so I soon settled down quite content and comfortable in the silver closet.

All would probably have gone well if Mr. van Push's original plan had been carried out, and if Mrs. van Push had not left the guests to be entertained by her lord and master (?) while she hurried into the dining-room to say a last word to the butler and to rearrange the roses.

"Yes," I heard her mutter to herself, "the countess must sit at van Push's right." I saw her change the position of two dinner cards and hastily alter the countess's position on my diagram.

Just then she closed the door of my closet and I thought I heard her go back to the parlor. I then opened the door for the sake of ventilation and view. I heard a stifled scream, and looking out saw Mrs. van Push, not deathly pale—that was impossible—but very much frightened.

"Its only a reporter in there," said the butler reassuringly. "Mr. van Push put him in to see the ladies' gowns, ma'am."

For a minute she regained her composure, but soon she lost it again, and saying never a word to me, whispered something to the servant. Then, to my utter amazement, I saw him run

over to my closet and excitedly take all the silver from the shelves and into another room.

I was dazed. I felt as if I had been arrested, tried and convicted for grand larceny, and was occupying a cell at Auburn instead of an empty silver closet in a gaudy dining-room.

I heard the laughter and chatter of the guests as they came nearer, then with sudden determination I rushed from the closet through a back door into the hall, and out into the night.

I wonder if Mr. van Push thought I was concealed in that closet all through dinner, and what he said when he missed the descriptions of the guests' dresses in this morning's paper.

When Ripley heard my story he laughed heartily and called over a young fellow named Lambkin, who had been on the staff a few days, and told him to look after the society department.

I rejoiced.

"What sort of work is it?" Lambkin asked me.

"Very interesting. You go out a good deal," I answered cheerfully, remembering how I had gone out of several fashionable houses too rapidly for comfort.



I think Lambkin will fare better than I did as society reporter. Probably he would be perfectly at home in a silver closet, or even concealed under a bed in an emergency. He always looks as if he had just left his barber—oiled hair, waxed mustache, etc. I imagine this sort of man, although he is usually harmless, doesn't mind being thought dangerous, and that is an essential quality in the successful society reporter, judging from my experience at the van Pushes and elsewhere.

I have dedicated one of Shackleton's verses of doggerel to Gerald Jenkins and Lambkin:

Society's pleasure for those who are in it ;  
That I don't honestly doubt ;  
But for those who are made " society men "  
By using a note-book, a pencil or pen,  
There's never a minute of pleasure or leisure  
In what's commonly called " going out."

## CHAPTER IX.

### MY FIRST IMPORTANT MURDER CASE—TEMPERATURES—EXPERT TESTIMONY.

FEBRUARY 14.—Nearly every man in looking back over the past few years of his life will remember a certain week, or perhaps but a day or an hour, which he feels sure he will not forget even to the day when he sleeps for the last time. This is true even with those who lead the most hum-drum lives, and doubly certain with the man or woman who is blest with a life full of what the world calls experiences.

If my memory almost fails me in my old age, and I forget all other incidents of my life as a journalist, there will still remain clearly imprinted on my mind many of the scenes, reports, mysteries, and suggested clues connected with the notorious double murder which occurred the night before last, and in which Mlle. Marteau and an unidentified man played the leading parts. Accounts of the tragedy were published in every New York paper yesterday morning and will be known, I suppose, all over the world, but I pride

myself on the exceptionally accurate story of the murder printed in *The Daily Bread*, for it was the result of a good deal of tiring, although unusually interesting work, on my part.

It was shortly past midnight on Feb. 12 (the day before yesterday), when I finished my account of a large dinner given in honor of a prominent statesman at a leading political club. There were but few reporters in the local room, most of them having left for the night, as there had been a scarcity of evening assignments. Those who still remained were busily concluding their various stories of which many sheets had already been sent upstairs, as the first edition was going to press in a few minutes.

I was preparing to start for home when the telephone bell rang, and one of the office boys, having answered it, called to the Night Editor: "Police Headquarters is on the wire."

Mr. Owl put the 'phone to his ear and listened to our man at Police Headquarters. Now, Owl rarely shows signs of surprise. I verily believe when the world falls into the sun, as certain scientists predict, our Night Editor, if he survives, will blandly remark: "This ought to make a

good story," and then send a man to report the incident. On the night of which I am writing, however, he came nearer being surprised than ever before. He had only held the telephone wire a minute or two when I noticed that he was evidently hearing an important item of news, and he looked just a trifle excited as I heard him say through the 'phone: "Yes ; send over all you know and I'll send a man up for the rest." He "rang off" Police Headquarters and said to me: "Shackleton says Mlle. Marteau has been killed—probably murdered. You will have time to find out something about it. Don't wait to send down any copy, but telephone me all the particulars you can obtain."

The murder of so prominent a woman as Mlle. Marteau was enough to promise an unusually startling story, but when I first heard of it I did not predict half the mystery now surrounding it. Although there is always a good deal of interest attached to such cases, it was with a laggard step that I started uptown to learn all I could of the death of Mlle. Marteau. I had been at work since early morning covering the railroad disaster of the night before. Scrabbles and I had divided

the story between us, he having written of the incidents at the scene of the catastrophe, in one of the suburbs, and one or two interviews with officials of the road, while I spent most of the day at the morgue with scores of men and women who were endeavoring to find missing friends among the killed. I could write innumerable pages about that day and tell at great length of the expectancy of the fathers, mothers, sisters, and brothers, and of others who, although perhaps not relatives, were dearer than relatives, as they passed from one plain, roughly-hewn wooden box to another, anxiously looking for the missing friend. Some were rewarded with success in their grim search, and the sight of their grief at recognizing a familiar face made me decidedly uncomfortable. I wished Scrabbles had taken my side of the story and I had taken his. I felt sure he would be as indifferently happy writing up scenes at the morgue as he would be reporting a Sunday-school picnic or a first night at the circus.

But some were unsuccessful in their search and left with a look of combined uncertainty and relief. I felt more kindly toward these, for they did not annoy me as much as the mourners.

It was probably owing to this day spent at the morgue that I started out to investigate the murder case with only half a heart. Mlle. Marteau's home was an apartment on the upper west side of town. She lived luxuriously, her profession—the stage—having dealt kindly with her, and few dramatic stars shone more brightly.

When I arrived at the house it was in a state of extreme confusion. Policemen who stood at the front entrance and at the door of Mlle. Marteau's apartment, allowed me to go in upon hearing my errand. When I entered the hallway I saw a number of people awaiting the arrival of the coroner, including a dozen or more reporters in different stages of impatience and interest as they asked the others a great variety of questions; a doctor, who answered a few of the queries; the dead woman's maid, who was far too awe-struck to make reply; the janitor, who did not jingle his bunch of keys or walk with a loud step, either because he forgot his usual custom or on account of a certain respect for the deceased which he had doubtless never shown the living. I stayed with this little gathering until one o'clock when, the coroner not having arrived, I went downstairs

and called up Mr. Owl on the telephone telling him all the facts I had been able to learn. He said: "Wait and see the coroner and try to get a word or two with him in time for publication." The other reporters telephoned the facts to their respective editors.

The coroner came too late to be interviewed for the morning papers, it being about three o'clock when he arrived, and when we followed him into the parlor where the murder had occurred. To describe the room as it appeared that night as a chamber of horrors would be to speak slightly of it. Even one or two of the oldest reporters among us could not suppress an exclamation as the door was opened and we looked in.

The room was brilliantly lighted by electricity and furnished with an unusual combination of splendor and good taste. A long divan covered with a handsome bearskin rug stood in front of the open fire-place, upon which, half reclining, rested the body of Mlle. Marteau. Opposite the sofa and on the other side of the fire in a large easy chair sat a man stone dead grasping a revolver in his right hand which hung limp over the

arm of the chair. As I first entered the room I could see only the man's back and paid little attention to him, my eyes being riveted on the murdered woman. Her forehead was covered with blood from the wound of a bullet. She wore a handsome gown of some rich dark material with a diamond brooch at the throat and other jewels on the breast. Her lips were parted in a smile showing a row of pretty teeth and leading us all to think she had been unaware of her murderer's intention until the fatal moment. After hurriedly jotting down a few notes about the woman's costume, position on the sofa, etc., I turned to look at the man in the chair. The instant I saw his face I started back in surprise. I had seen him before, but I think had my life depended on it, I could not have remembered where. Of one thing I was certain—within the past week I had come into close contact with the man. I did not think we had spoken on meeting, but knew we had met.

No one there was able to identify him. There was not the slightest clew—not even a tell-tale scrap of paper or card in his pockets. The maid said she had not seen him enter the room, and



declared her mistress had come home alone in a cab after the play. She said she had left the actress alone in the parlor reading and had not suspected the presence of another person until she had heard the pistol's report. She fancied Mlle. Marteau must have admitted the man herself, but she did not remember to have seen him before, and yet she had been in Mlle. Marteau's service over ten years.

The servant at the main door made the man's entrance a mystery by emphatically denying that he had admitted any one asking for Mlle. Marteau the whole day. It was true he had been downstairs at lunch and dinner, but the bell had not rung during his absence. "No," he said in answer to our questions, "the apartment door cannot be opened from the outside. No; I did not leave it open while away and never have."

I knew that could I remember where I had formerly seen the murderer the story would be of great value to *The Daily Bread*, for it would be a "beat" and my paper could boast of having been the first to establish the man's identity. As every one knows, exclusive stories are sought with great eagerness by all newspaper men, for they

bring a certain amount of favor and prominence in the eyes of the editors, who are never so happy as after a good "scoop." But, despite the fact that I knew nothing could be of greater advantage to me in my newspaper work than to identify this man, I tried to remember where and exactly when I had seen him, without the least success. On the night of which I am writing he was well-dressed, which I thought rather strange as I dimly recollected having seen him before in worn-out clothes, with no regard for recent fashions. He had evidently shot himself after murdering the woman, for there was a bullet wound behind his ear and the revolver in his hand contained two empty chambers.

The most mysterious circumstance connected with the case was discovered by the doctor who first examined the bodies after the maid had found them. It is mentioned in the clipping I have kept of my first account of the murder as it appeared in *The Daily Bread* of February 13th. All the facts I have just jotted down in my diary were printed, except, of course, my partial recognition of the murderer. Besides these there was about a quarter of a column written by Shackleton concerning one or two detective theories.

The following is part of my story as published in *The Daily Bread* :

“A strange feature of the double tragedy which baffles Dr. Baldwin, who first examined the bodies, and which will doubtless perplex many medical experts, is the fact that although Mlle. Marteau’s body was still warm when found after the murder, the remains of her assailant were quite cold, as though he had been dead much longer. Dr. Baldwin said late last night: ‘It is the most puzzling case I have known in my twenty years of medical practice. Mlle. Marteau had evidently not been dead over two or three hours when I first saw her, and yet to all appearances the man had died some time before. Perhaps this is merely one of the exceptional cases which occasionally arise in medical life, and which seem almost to upset the theories proved by long practice, but it is strange—very strange. There is no doubt in my mind, however, that the man murdered Mlle. Marteau and then committed suicide. I have known the actress almost from the beginning of her career on the stage, having first seen her in Paris, where I studied medicine, and cannot imagine what motive he had in killing her. She was of a particularly quiet disposition, was wrapt up in her art, and, as far as I know, never had any affairs

of love or the slightest shadow of scandal connected with her life. It's all strange—very strange. I would give a good deal to learn the truth of it.'"

In addition to this interview there was a half-column sketch of the actress's life, which was written in the office as soon as the news of the murder reached there, and more details of the crime which I had told a stenographer over the telephone. There were in all two columns printed about the tragedy, with a picture of the actress.

The next morning (yesterday), when a half dozen or more Central Office and private detectives gathered in the apartment, I was able to learn of a few additional facts. This, however, was not owing to any efforts on the part of the detectives to enlighten me, for detectives are extremely loth to talk of their clues to newspaper men.

While examining the parlor I obtained a piece of information which served to increase the mystery of the case, although the detectives declared otherwise. The maid, having been in an intensely excited, almost hysterical mood the night before, had not told a very detailed or accurate

story. Now, however, she had partially regained her senses, and said she had heard only one pistol shot—not two, as we had supposed. I could see that for a minute this perplexed even the most experienced sleuths, and did not forget to mention that fact in this morning's paper. The doors of the room were hung with heavy portières, and one of the Central Office men suggested that these might muffle the sound of a very loud report.

"Granted," broke in another, "but why should the maid have heard one shot and not two? She would naturally have heard both or none."

"I am not sure of that," said a third. "Some shots sound louder than others. Cartridges are rarely charged exactly alike."

A young detective named Fox, whom I had met several times before when assigned to police court news items, and with whom I had formed a warm friendship, suggested that we should load a pistol with blank cartridges, send the other men from the room to where the maid had been on the night of the murder, and then fire two shots to see if they were both heard by those outside. Fox being rather inexperienced in the de-

tective business, the others did not heed his plan, and one laughingly told him that a man could hear almost any sound if he expected it.

*Feb. 15.*—There was no important evidence and no motive for the crime discovered at the coroner's inquest. The jury brought in a verdict of "Madeleine Marteau killed by unknown man, and said unknown man subsequently killed by his own hand." That was all. The maid servant was put on the witness stand, but told nothing of which I have not already spoken. The only circumstance which made the inquest unusually interesting was the wide difference in the temperatures of the two bodies just after the tragedy. Two well-known medical experts, who had been told of the fact by Dr. Baldwin, held a long and rather heated discussion as to the time after death in which a body loses all warmth. One, the well-known Dr. Norwood, was of the opinion that the case in question was no more than an exception to the general rule, and that the lack of heat in the dead criminal, instead of showing that he had been dead several hours, was due only to a lack of circulation, a thinness of his blood, and a constitution widely different from that of his victim.

The other expert (a certain Dr. Felix), even went so far as to say he believed the man had been dead at least twenty-four hours, while the actress had died but a few minutes before the murder was discovered. He had no explanation to offer regarding this "obvious fact," as he spoke of it, but remained decided and firm in his opinion. He had a terse and somewhat uncultured way of expressing his views which called forth a good deal of slurring criticism and various caricatures from the press.

## CHAPTER X.

### VILLAINS AND VENETIAN CLOAKS—DETECTIVE FOX CALLS ON ME.

FEBRUARY 20.—The public has a fairly good memory, but does not use it much. Reminiscences are for the individual only. Affairs of to-day and coming events interest the world at large; yesterday's happenings bore it. Mystery lends especial interest. When it visits us we open our arms and receive it with a hearty welcome. We treat it as we do the disguised villain on the stage, whom we feel is absolutely essential to our happiness. Of what interest is a play bereft of the man with the giant stride, the black mask, and the somber Venetian cloak? It is always a Venetian cloak, be the scene in barren Siberia or wild western America. I once saw a traveling company thrillingly depict an Indian massacre of the far West. Three of the chiefs who stole stealthily toward the doomed cabin of the settler wore Venetian cloaks. It was perhaps the best disguise an Indian could have chosen, but I found out afterward that the chiefs



wore Venetian cloaks merely because a landlord in another town had taken a fancy to their trunks containing the Indian massacre costumes. The troupe had been playing the "Merchant of Venice" and, although the three chiefs' stage names were respectively *Hungry Dog*, *Away-from-home*, and *Poisoned Arrow*, the night I saw them, two appeared in the cloaks of *Antonia* and *Shylock*, and the third wore *Portia's* wig and gown.

But despite these little discrepancies we honestly, down deep in our hearts, love the villain. We must have him. We should be unhappy were he not there to hold his mantle before his face, stalk down center and say to the moon, in husky tones: "I must dissemble!" He invariably whispers "Sh!" as if to warn the moon not to betray him, and even this trifling muffled admonition pleases us.

But the minute the villain becomes converted to Christianity, in Act 7, Scene 4, either through the efforts of his deceased mother, the pious priest, or the angelic heroine, and throws aside his cloak, his wig, his mask, and other features of his disguise, we lose all interest in him. We positively dislike him for having identified him-

self. When a mystery ceases to be mysterious, the public says good-by to it forever and looks for another.

And so, now that in the eyes of the general public and the press nothing remains undecided concerning Mlle. Marteau's murder, interest in the case has rapidly waned. Soon the tragedy will be among the forgotten incidents that have been, and will only be brought to the minds of those who were closely connected with the actress, or those who chance to look over police records or the files of a newspaper. No; perhaps there are one or two others who will not forget the tragedy very soon—young Detective Fox and I, for instance.

I was sitting at my desk in the local room yesterday when the office boy came over and handed me a card, informing me that Joseph Fox of the Central Office Detective Bureau wished to see me. I told the boy to ask him in and pulled up a chair next to mine. Fox came, but had little time to stay. He said he would like to see me privately for a few minutes and asked me to go downstairs. He looked as though he had something interesting to say, and so, although I was

very busy, having a column story to write concerning the unpleasant weather, I went down with him. There is a bar-room, dignified by the name of Karl's Café, near the office, and I asked Fox if he would not come in and tell his story over a glass or two of something invigorating.

"No, I am much obliged," he answered. "I don't drink, but I'll go in with you, and we can find some quiet corner in which to talk." Accordingly we went into this be-mirrored wine-room, and found empty one of those little boxes screened off from the open room in which men sit and drink, throwing dice, scheming and exchanging confidences. We opened the little swinging door and ordered a couple of seltzers as a sort of payment for the use of the room.

Fox has a way of making straight for his point quicker than any man I ever knew—that is, if a round-about road is not essential to the accomplishment of his end. Yet, although we are ostensibly the best of friends, I feel that he weighs his words rather carefully when talking to me. After the seltzer was brought he asked, "What do you suppose *The Daily Bread* would pay to be able to prove positively that the man who killed Mlle. Marteau is still alive?"

"For God's sake, Fox!" I exclaimed, in astonishment. "Did I not see the man lying as dead as ever any one lay, and has he not been under the ground in Potter's Field for a fortnight?"

"Suppose I prove he was not the murderer?" whispered Fox.

"That is supposing an impossibility. The man had a wound behind the ear and a pistol in his hand."

"Does that prove anything? Because I see a man wearing a watch do I say he has stolen it?" asked the detective.

"No," I answered, "but to use the hackneyed instance of circumstantial evidence: If you see a man's footprint in the snow you know a man has been there whether you see *him* or not."

"Yes, but I don't know who he was. I know the man with Mlle. Marteau that night was shot, but damned if I know who shot him! But, Forbes, I have no time to discuss circumstantial evidence. The question is, how much will *The Daily Bread* pay for the story? I have an idea—not positive proof now, it's true, but I hope it will be later—that the Marteau woman and the man in

her room were shot by a third person. As you know, I am rushed with other business, for which I am regularly paid. There is no especial inducement for me to work up this Marteau case now that the man who is supposed to have been the murderer is dead and buried, and no legal requirement of further investigation. Of course, there would be a certain amount of glory in bringing out what I believe is the real truth of the affair, but glory isn't ready money, and means a lot of extra work. If I had any reasonable inducement I could afford to give what time is not devoted to my regular work to following up my Marteau clew."

"Are you sure of being successful if you do work it up?" I asked with much interest.

"Forbes, you as a newspaper man should realize that one can never be certain of success until he succeeds. I acknowledge my clew is a small one, but it's a clew nevertheless. Perhaps I shall need your help if I decide to work upon it. What do you think *The Daily Bread* will pay?"

I told Fox that I had no idea and advised him to see the Managing Editor.

"Can I ask him now?" I said I thought so, and we hurried back upstairs.

I considered it best to see Farley alone, first, and tell him of the detective's extraordinary conclusion. So I went into his private office, which adjoins the local room, and astonished him with the story.

"What," he exclaimed, "Marteau shot by another man! I wonder if there's any truth in it." Nothing is regarded as an impossibility by an old newspaper man, and, although Farley was inclined to doubt that which the detective believed to be true, he was not so surprised as I had been a few minutes before in Karl's café. Mr. Farley pressed a button on his desk, which was instantly answered by an office boy, who was told to admit Mr. Fox to the sanctum.

"Do you expect to be able to prove your theory?" the Managing Editor asked Fox, after I had introduced them.

"All I can say is that I shall try pretty hard if it's worth my while to do so," was the reply.

"Are you to work up the case yourself, or shall I put one of my men on it?"

"I'll do it myself," answered the detective.

"I don't want to disclose the points unless they lead to a proof." Farley asked the central office man if he expected to find the murderer, or merely to prove that the man found dead in Mlle. Marteau's apartment was innocent of the crime. Fox said the latter circumstance was conclusively proved in his own mind, but as the man was dead and buried and pronounced guilty at a coroner's inquest, it would be difficult to prove him innocent in the eyes of the police and public.

"If I can find a motive," said the detective, "I may find the real murderer. Yes ; I must first discover a motive."

"How much do you want for the story if it pans out?" asked the Managing Editor.

"Evidence that Marteau's murderer is still alive is all I can sell you for publication," answered Fox. "If I discover his identity I must hand him over to the police before giving his name to the papers. How much is the story worth?"

For a few minutes the Managing Editor looked thoughtful; then a little time was spent in bargaining. One asked: "How much will you take?" the other asked: "How much will you

give?" At last Fox said he considered the story worth \$1,000, but Farley did not agree. Finally, however, the Managing Editor offered \$500 for the facts which the detective might make known, and which, after being written up by one of the *Daily Bread* staff, Farley might see fit to publish. Fox asked that I be detailed to help him, and Farley assigned me to the case.

"Everything I tell you must be treated with the strictest secrecy," said the detective, as we walked down Park Row. I assured him he could trust me implicitly, and eagerly waited for his disclosure, but he said: "I have a good deal of work to-night, so I must leave you now. Drop in and see me to-morrow at noon."

This took place last evening, and at twelve to-day I expect to see Fox and hear his opinions concerning the murder. It is now ten o'clock. Two hours more.

Still the face of that man in the apartment haunts me; but according to Fox it is not the face of a murderer. Partially to recognize a man whom I have seen somewhere before, and to endeavor to recall the place and time of the previous meeting without success, is in ordinary



instances decidedly annoying. How much more so, then, when a large stake depends upon the identification! For several days I have been almost in torture trying to recall the "where" and the "when" of my meeting with the man. I fancy I saw his face somewhere in a crowd. It was not a criminal face; it seemed honest, but not especially intelligent. A man of about forty years old. I have a vague feeling that I saw it under unpleasant circumstances in a crowd—disagreeable surroundings. Was I at work upon an assignment? No—wait—yes; I think so. There is the face in front of my desk—everywhere—at my side—looking over my shoulder at this diary in apparent derision at my forgetfulness. Its eyes are closed. Have I ever seen them open? I don't remember them. It's a face without color—hair disheveled—cheeks sunken. I saw it just before—yes—was it not *the day before the murder*? Yes; the day before. And it was pale and motionless. I must have seen it here in town; I have not been away. To what have I lately been assigned. The Monday before the murder where did I go? Ah, yes; to gather society news. No crowd; at least not the

sort of crowd where I saw the face. On Tuesday a big fire uptown and fashionable news, including van Push's dinner. The next morning Banker Wadsworth's funeral—perhaps it was there in the church. There was a crowd—no; I can't recall the face. I did not see it in church. What did I do the next day? I covered a political dinner in the evening and in the afternoon—but let me look back over my diary. Feb. 14—that's the day I want. On that page I wrote: "I spent most of the day at the morgue." All day at the morgue—at the morgue the entire day—faces—a crowd—Good God!. Shall I write this in my diary? It may be read by others. Am I right? Yes; in the morgue I saw the face. It was the face of a man lying among the unidentified dead—in a plain pine box—and that was the day before the murder. It's impossible! Is this a nightmare? Am I writing in my sleep? No; the man lay there with many others. I remember it well. But he was not killed until the next day. How can that be?

*Feb. 21.*—I feel sure that what I told Fox and what Fox told me yesterday was unlike anything one man ever told another. Scrabbles says that

nothing is new but news, and even news is old; but Scrabbles did not hear my conversation with Fox.

I determined to hear what the detective had to say before telling him of my discovery. It's usually a good plan to let the other man speak first. I found the young fellow at Police Headquarters and we took lunch together at a small restaurant not far away on Mulberry street. It was then that Fox shared with me his deductions regarding the celebrated Marteau case.

"What I noticed was this," he began, after I had a second time declared that all he said was to be regarded confidentially. "In the first place the maid heard but one shot. The other men didn't think much of that fact, or if it did impress them as being strange they did not say so. From the first this perplexed me and I soon decided that the maid heard only one shot simply because the revolver was fired but once that night."

"But there were two bullet wounds and two empty chambers in the gun," I objected.

Fox paid no attention to my interruption, but went on: "The second circumstance leading me to think Marteau's murderer was a third person, was

the difference in the temperatures of the bodies. You remember Dr. Felix's testimony at the inquest? He was fully convinced the man had died before the woman, and yet because he is not well known as an expert and because Dr. Norwood, who opposed him, is famous, the latter's testimony was all that was really considered. Dr. Baldwin, who first saw the bodies and was Madeleine Marteau's physician, had probably never been called to a murder case before and was too much excited to pay much attention to the temperatures. He saw the man lying dead with a pistol in his hand and the woman dead from a bullet wound in her forehead, and took it for granted that it was murder followed by suicide."

"It certainly could not have been suicide followed by murder," I broke in, smiling grimly.

"It might," returned Fox.

"So you think the man first killed himself and then shot the woman," I said, laughing in a whisper at the ghastly impossibility of such a thing, and asking the waiter for a stronger cup of coffee.

"I think a third person shot the man either in the morning or afternoon, and killed the actress just before she was found. The maid told me

Mlle. Marteau was at home all the morning, went out to lunch and did not return until after the play. She said no one had called, but that Mlle. Marteau might have admitted a visitor in the morning and left him in her apartment, expecting to return soon. After she left the man might have been shot by some one who entered the rooms unseen. The maid was downstairs at lunch, and could not have heard the report."

"But how about others in the house?" I objected.

"No; the sound would not have been carried downstairs, and it is probable that the people living in the next apartment were also at lunch. Anyway, the heavy portières would have deadened the sound. After having killed the man the murderer may have concealed himself until Mlle. Marteau's return. While she lay comfortably reading he may have shot her and placed his first victim in the position which we saw so as to allay suspicion. Of course this is only a 'sposen case,' as the darkies say, but it may amount to something. I have never taken much trouble before to-day to prove a dead man innocent, but I'm to have a try at it now."

"Your supposition regarding the murder is partly right and partly wrong," I returned calmly. "The man died before the woman, but not in her apartment."

It was now Fox's turn to be surprised, and the fund of information I had reserved told well.

"What in thunder do *you* know about it?" he asked, leaning forward in astonishment.

"The man was dead the day before the murder," I went on, thinking of the morgue.

"The devil he was!"

"Yes; and he died a natural death, I believe."

"The deuce he did!"

"The wound of the bullet was made after death."

"Then he was a corpse when murdered," exclaimed Fox, as he called the waiter and ordered fried potatoes. That was about the grimmest paradox I had ever heard, but there was truth in it.

"Yes;" I answered, "the man was murdered after his death."

"What leads you to think so?" asked Fox, incredulously.

"I saw the man lying dead at the morgue the day before the murder."

"Can you swear to that?"

"Yes."

"Why did you not make it known at the inquest?"

I told the detective I had not remembered until yesterday where I had previously seen the man.

"Then you do think some one took the corpse from the morgue, shot it, took it to the apartment and left it there as a blind?" asked Fox, thoughtfully.

"It seems absolutely impossible," I replied, "and yet I don't know what else to think. On Wednesday I go to the morgue and see there a number of unidentified dead men. The next day I go to an apartment and find one of them with a bullet wound in his head and a pistol in his hand. Such an experience is enough to endanger a man's reason."

Fox said nothing for a few minutes while I endeavored to gather my thoughts into some pretense of order. Presently he remarked, as he stirred his coffee with a tin spoon and a meditative air: "One thing must be done. We must see Dr. Baldwin, for he should be able to tell us

something convincing. He saw the man first, and although I am not well up in medicine, I think had the man been shot after death the wound would have shown it."

"Dr. Baldwin is still out of town," I answered, "but I don't think he can help us. I talked to him the night of the murder, and although he acknowledged it was a strange case, he explained it, as did Dr. Norwood, at the inquest."

"But he did not for an instant imagine the man was dead when shot. If someone had put that idea into his head he might have talked very differently. One of us must see him. He is visiting friends up near Albany. You can take an afternoon train or to-night's boat."

Fox was as good as a time-table. He knew the hours of the arrival and departure of almost any train on any road. He was also a capital steamboat guide, and far more lucid than the printed ones which worry mankind. I arranged to take the night boat for Albany, and after lunch Fox suggested that we drop in to see a coroner's physician whom he knew to "cook up" some questions for Dr. Baldwin, as he said. We found the physician at his office, and after intro-



ducing me Fox asked: "If I shoot a man how will the wound look within twenty-four hours after I do so?" The doctor didn't seem much surprised at the question, evidently understanding the detective business.

"You should know," he answered.

"I do; but tell me this: would the wound remain open?"

"Of course not; it would contract, and remain so for some time," replied the doctor.

"Good," returned Fox. "But, now, suppose I shoot a corpse, how about the wound, then?"

At this the physician looked hard at Fox as if to make certain of the latter's sobriety. After being satisfied on this point he answered: "I never knew of such a case, but if the man had been dead for any length of time before you shot him, I should say the wound would remain open, there being no muscular strength to close it."

"Thanks," observed Fox cheerfully. "It was of that I wanted to be sure. See you again soon. Good-by." And we left the coroner's physician with a puzzled expression upon his usually Sphinx-like countenance.

*Feb. 22.*—I left for Albany last night, stayed

there four or five hours and am now writing in my journal on my return trip in the train. I always carry the diary with me nowadays to make sure of not shelving it for a twelvemonth as I did before.

I talked with Dr. Baldwin and asked him the questions Fox had suggested. He was surprised to see me and greeted me with: "Halloa! still on the Marteau case? What more is there to find out about it?"

"I came to ask you if you ever examined the suicide's wound?"

Dr. Baldwin declared that he had done so.

"Did it look like an ordinary bullet hole?"

"To tell the truth," he answered, "wounds are not my specialty. I haven't seen more than two or three in twenty years. Yes; it was quite common-place—in fact, really quite an every-day wound," he went on facetiously. This disappointed me, but I still had a fair supply of interrogatory ammunition in reserve.

"Did the wound look exactly like that which caused the actress's death?" I asked.

"Well, you know, I did not compare them," he said, "but as I remember, it did not. That

was brought out at the inquest. It looked as if the man had been dead longer."

"Suppose he had been dead a day—would the wound have remained open or contracted?" I asked.

"It's hard to say. I should think it would not have opened much in twenty-four hours."

"Was the man's wound opened or closed?"

"I believe it was open. But what in heaven does that go to prove? You reporters do ask the most senseless and fathomless questions."

"Perhaps we do sometimes," I returned, laughing, without showing my satisfaction. "It's a habit we all have. We all do it. It's part of the business. I am much obliged to you for having answered some of them. It may help me in a story I am working up."

"Don't use my name," said the worthy doctor; "that is—not very much, not *too* much, you know." I assured him I would not, which did not please him, though he didn't admit it, and took this train for New York.

So the trip to Albany was even more satisfactory than I had expected, and I believe Fox will now share my theory.

## CHAPTER XI.

JOURNALISTIC DIPLOMACY — “GREATEST PLEASURES” — PROFESSOR KLATZENBURG — A BEAT IN “THE DAILY BREAD.”

FEBRUARY 23.—I have not yet told Alice my theory, nor of my having seen the supposed murderer at the morgue, nor have I spoken of it to the Managing Editor, with whom I had a chat this morning for a few minutes.

“Well, Forbes, how’s the Marteau story panning out?” he asked. “When will you have it ready for me?”

“In two or three days,” I answered. “The story will go, all right. There is proof from a medical point of view and we may obtain documentary evidence.”

“The sooner I have it the better,” he returned. “The other papers may hear of it and spoil our beat.”

After assuring Farley that I would do my best to bring in the story this week I went and discussed it with the City Editor and got his advice as to how I should write it.

“Been lying off? Haven’t seen you for some time,” said some of the reporters. I told them I was at work upon a beat for Farley, and they didn’t ask any more questions. Exclusive stories in which the Managing Editor takes an especial interest are not usually discussed by those who are not at work upon them. In fact, the whole newspaper business is a big secret. The local room and other offices are shadowed in secrecy. At times, when even the most casual remarks pass from one reporter to another they are in whispers. When the City Editor calls a man to the desk, the assignment is usually given in an undertone, be it only for a small and unimportant story. The old Venetian council chambers, with their masked triumvirates and disguised dodges, bore scarcely a more secretive aspect than the Editor-in-chief’s sanctum of to-day. I suppose this secrecy is observed by journalists partly to keep whatever exclusive news there is within the walls of each particular office and partly owing to what seems to be an unwritten law of journalistic diplomacy. The successful newspaper man is a born diplomat. He has some tact, a good deal of adaptability and

congeniality, together with any amount of what is most essential to perfect diplomacy—the power to keep his own counsel. It is habitual with a reporter or editor, if talking of matters connected with his paper to those not concerned, to say nothing which can be distorted by a repeater, and nothing which if repeated will be told as coming from its originator. The common-place conversations of reporters are often so well guarded as to appear ludicrous, but without doubt secrecy is the best policy in the newspaper office. The staff lives up to this maxim to a man, some being positively fanatical in upholding it. I know one whose favorite phrase is “don’t say I said so.” The words have become a part of him. They are the features of his vocabulary. He uses them now as naturally and habitually as he lifts the glass from the bar. He ends every sentence with them. If he tells you he has a good story for to-morrow’s paper, he adds: “But don’t say I said so.” I have actually heard him say: “I think it looks like rain, but don’t say I said so.” This is but one of the many instances of his secretiveness acquired from a long newspaper life.

When a man is assigned to an exclusive story

by the Managing Editor he at once rises in the estimation of the staff, many of whom have never received orders from a higher official than the City Editor. Some one in writing on the subject of journalism as a career has spoken of the jealousy existing among members of the same staff—the jealous striving for favor and prominence in the eyes of the editors, but I have rarely been able to discover any such jealousy in newspaper men. Jealousy is a troublous trait, and few reporters harbor in them that which may prove a worriment. Perhaps it is because they are the busiest of men that reporters love the ease and comfort they so rarely experience. One of them remarked the other day that his idea of perfect happiness was a comfortable easy-chair and a good cigar. Speaking of happiness reminds me of Scrabbles's definition. I asked him to-day what he considered the greatest pleasure in life, and he answered: "I never thought much about it. There isn't really any greatest pleasure of life, but only of the moment. The greatest pleasure is to be gained by doing what we most want to do when we most want to do it. If I am desperately thirsty a drink will give me the

greatest of pleasures. If I have been hunting news all day and feel in the mood for a lounging chair, that chair will bring me the greatest pleasure. If I am cold, give me a hot drink—pleasure. If warm bring me something with ice in it—pleasure. When I'm hungry—food—pleasure. When I'm sleepy—sleep—pleasure. Superlatives are singular numbers with but two exceptions—pain and pleasure. There are innumerable 'greatest pleasures,' and as many, if not more 'greatest sorrows.' Have a beer?"

"Thanks," I laughed, "as I am at the present moment unbearably thirsty it will, according to your theory, give me the greatest of pleasures." Scrabbles smiled and we visited Karl's café.

"I don't agree with you," I observed, as I saw Scrabbles take unto himself various morsels of the free lunch, and decided to follow his example. "I think the greatest pleasure is not gained by doing what we most want to do, but by not doing that which, above all things, we do not wish to do."

"That's a negative enjoyment," returned Scrabbles, "and negatives are never superlatives."



These highly interesting philosophical discussions of Scrabbles's and mine don't often last long. We usually end them abruptly with a Park Row lunch or some other such affair not especially conducive to philosophy. At the time I have written of, however, the appearance in the café of Professor Klatzenburg prolonged our talk, thereby incidentally increasing the number of our beverages.

Professor Klatzenburg is one of those men who become prominent in the world because the world cannot understand them. It sees him uptown as the well-known lecturer on literature, theosophy, Buddhism, spiritualism, and the occult sciences. Downtown it sees him a good fellow, perhaps a little too fond of wine, shabbily dressed, unshaven, and the true Bohemian. Common sense laughs at him, religions own him, religion turns her back upon him, Bohemia talks with him, Mayfair listens to him, and eccentricity supports him.

I have reported one or two of his lectures complimentarily because I believe in him. (He has given several excellent dinners to newspaper men.) When Scrabbles and I saw him on the

day in question, the philosopher was regaling himself with the contents of a half-liter mug and a cheese sandwich. We went and appealed to him to settle our question. After a jovial greeting I said: "What do you consider the greatest pleasure in life, Professor Klatzenburg? I say it is to be gained by not doing what emphatically we do not wish to do. Scrabbles says to do what you most want to do when you most want to do it, is the height of pleasure."

"Yes, Professor, what do you think about it?" asked Scrabbles, ordering another round.

Professor Klatzenburg looked down into his half liter as though to find a suitable answer in its amber depths.

"I tink, shentlemens," he answered after having lighted a black and murderous-looking cigar, "I tink ze greadest bleasure in life is to have ze bower to do anytink and to do notink." Then the professor shrouded himself and his philosophy in a vast cloud of smoke from the black cigar.

"That is not the professor's way," remarked Scrabbles in an aside; "he has the power to do almost nothing and he has done everything."

"But on ze whole," continued Professor Klatz-



“Everytink is notink and notink is anytink.”

—Page 141.



enburg, his round face emerging from the smoke like the setting sun from a cloud, "on ze whole I tink everytink is notink and notink is anytink."

Scrabbles looked at me and I at Scrabbles.

"Everything is nothing and nothing is anything," muttered the reporter with a stunned look.

"Everything is nothing and nothing is anything," I echoed in deep thought. At this Scrabbles suddenly remembered he had an assignment and I thought of my appointment with Fox. So we hurriedly left the professor to his sandwich, his mug of beer, and his wholesale stock of thoughts.

Fox was pleased at the success of my trip to Albany.

"The next thing to be done," said he, "is to have a talk with the Morgue authorities and learn what we can about the body you saw there and at Mlle. Marteau's." Accordingly we paid a visit to the Morgue. Although the day was doleful and disagreeable, a conglomeration of snow, sleet, and rain having fallen, and the streets being covered with slush; and although Fox and I were bound for one of the most dismal and lugubrious places in town, we were in the best of spirits, Fox

undoubtedly seeing the \$500 coming nearer, and I feeling that I also had a finger in the pie, or rather in one of the best newspaper beats of the year. We interviewed the Morguekeeper, Fox acting as spokesman. The list of dead who had been identified and taken from the Morgue on February 12 contained minute descriptions of all these men and women. Thus we had little trouble in finding the description of which we were in search. It read as follows: "Man—dark hair, smooth face, middle-aged, 5 ft. 10 in., slight scar over left eye."

"When was that man brought here?" asked Fox. The Morguekeeper sent for an ambulance surgeon who informed us that the man had received a stroke of apoplexy in the street on February 12 and had died a few hours after having been taken to the hospital.

"Who identified him?" asked Fox, endeavoring to conceal his great interest. Again the Morguekeeper consulted the records.

"The deceased was taken from here by his brother."

"Do you remember the brother's appearance?"

“Yes; I think so. He was a good deal better dressed than the unfortunate. I suppose he was a rich brother—probably would have nothing to do with the relative until the relative was a corpse—probably looked down on him in life, you know, but decided to give him a decent burial for family’s sake. There are lots of these fellows who come here, and——” But the detective was not there to hear suppositions, so he interrupted impatiently: “How did he hear of his brother’s death?”

“That’s more than I can tell you,” answered the Morguekeeper. “He came here, described the man he was looking for and took him away. That’s all I know.”

“What was his name?”

“Francis Troxwell.”

After learning this we obtained a more accurate and detailed description of the identifier and left the Morguekeeper in a state of bewilderment.

“Of couse ‘Troxwell’ is a fictitious name, and that man was no more the corpse’s brother than I am yours,” said Fox as we left the morgue. “He was the murderer. I think the story is about complete enough to print.” I agreed and

we started downtown for the *Daily Bread* office where we had another long talk with the Managing Editor who said, after having heard all the details: "It's a good story—yes; a damned good story. Stick to facts, be accurate, and make three columns of it."

"Has Sibley got his cuts ready?" I asked.

"Yes," replied Farley. "He has a sketch of the actress's apartments, and of the dead man. I want you to give him a description of the man who used the corpse as a blind so he can make a sketch from it. There will be three cuts printed with the story."

Then we went down to Karl's café happy and on good terms with the world in general.

"I am not much on writing things up," said Fox. "You may as well write the story, and as the morgue side of it is all yours I'll divide the profits with you." I spent three or four hours working on the story this evening, and I think to-morrow's edition of *The Daily Bread* will have some decidedly startling news, thanks to Joseph Fox, of the Central Office Detective Bureau, and S. E. Forbes, journalist.

*Feb. 24.*—This morning's *Daily Bread* has



caused even greater interest than I predicted. Everyone is discussing the sensational discovery. Doubtless other newspaper editors are in an exasperated frame of mind. Nothing pleases an editor so much as the publishing of a particularly good, exclusive story, but few things vex his soul so much as the printing of such a story by a confrère. *The Daily Bread* printed what is known as a "scare head" over the Marteau story. There are all kinds of heads to a newspaper. I don't mean the heads of various departments (Heaven knows there are all sorts of these, too!), but the captions that find a resting-place above the articles, telling people what they are going to read about. There is the plain, humble-minded, unassuming single-line head which finds a home over the least important items of news. This modest little chap is of the smallest type used for heads, and, unlike most people who live at the top of things, it never makes much of a stir in the world. Then there is the head, composed of two kinds of type, which lives in all sorts of places—on the top floor of foreign dispatches, local news stories not exceeding half a column, art notes, and many other

articles, which, although of more or less importance, are not considered sufficiently so to startle the populace. Besides these, there is the much-used and somewhat ostentatious display head, which rarely deigns to surmount anything but a story of general interest. It is made up of three or four kinds of type, and when people see it they expect to find something beneath about which they will find it worth while to talk after dinner, or at lunch in the club; but the display head is a deceptive fellow. Like a good many other citizens, it talks loud, and, as a rule, says very little. The "scare head" is aptly described by its name, and by the following copy of the one which appeared over my Marteau story:

## **MADELEINE MARTEAU'S MURDERER.**

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**STARTLING DISCOVERY BY "THE DAILY BREAD."**

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**THE PERSON WHO SHOT THE FAMOUS ACTRESS STILL AT LARGE.**

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**The Supposed Murderer and Suicide Found in Mlle. Marteau's Apartment Proved Innocent.**

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**MOST MYSTERIOUS CRIME KNOWN TO THE POLICE IN THIS CITY.**

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The murderer of Mlle. Marteau, the famous actress, is still at large. The man who was found dead in the actress's room, and whom the Coroner's Jury and the world in general pronounced guilty of the murder and of subsequent suicide, and who now lies buried in Potter's Field, is innocent of both crimes. This has been proved by a *Daily Bread* reporter so as to leave no room for even the shadow of a doubt.

The man or woman guilty of the murder has not yet been found, nor is there the smallest clew to lead to the murderer's apprehension.

The tragedy occurred on February 12. On that day the man who, until to-day was supposed to have been guilty of one of the most dastardly murders on record, was seen at the Morgue by a

*Daily Bread* reporter. Even at that time he was dead. Dr. Felix, who testified at the inquest and who was held up to no small amount of ridicule by the other medical expert, was by no means in error when he said the unknown man had been dead at least twenty-four hours before the actress.

The only supposition regarding the tragedy which seems reasonable, is that the man's body was taken from the morgue by the real murderer and used as a blind to hoodwink the police. If this was the case, the murderer must have been one of the most cold-blooded, deliberate, and methodical criminals New York, and in fact the whole world, has ever had the pleasure of hearing about.

All the detailed facts of the murder discovered by Detective Fox and me were printed after the above introduction. The story told how the man's remains had been taken from the morgue by a man representing himself as a brother of the deceased. It contained also my interview with Dr. Baldwin, and gave the views of Fox's friend, the coroner's physician, regarding the difference in a bullet's effect upon a living or dead body. In fact, the whole story was a mere statement of facts without exaggeration. It was kept as free from sensationalism as possible, according to the

managing editor's instructions, *The Daily Bread* not being a sensational sheet, but laying claim to dignity and respectability. I did not mention the detective's name, according to his request.

I should like very much to find the murderer of Mlle. Marteau. One thing, however, has been accomplished for the ends of justice; a man who was certainly not in a position to defend himself has been proven innocent of a terrible crime. That's the most important thing. The next is to prove some one guilty. I wonder if that will ever be done. Will the young detective find his man? I doubt it. There is no clew. But if he does I hope he will have the good sense to tell me before any one else so I may delight the hearts of the *Daily Bread* editors with another exclusive story. I must remember to see Fox about this little matter. That's all right. I shall not forget. I have turned my ring around. Perhaps it would be a good plan to jog the detective's memory with a small dinner at "The Black Sheep," or Zanzetti's. I'll try it some evening when I have no work to keep me busy and money to spare—some evening.

## CHAPTER XII.

MISS NIMBLE—A GRAND ANNUAL BALL—"TIPS"  
—WEATHERBY'S HOLIDAY—LORD KOKEBY.

FEBRUARY 26.—I have never yet seen Miss Nimble dressed in rags, a prisoner's garb or men's clothes. I have never heard of her hiding in bureau drawers or living in keyholes. I do not believe she spends most of her time sweeping streets or playing the part of a lady's maid in a prominent family. She does not talk in a shrill, disagreeable voice, and in no way that I have noticed has she proved herself an enormity. I was quite surprised to find her a peaceable, unoffending, modest, unassuming, hard-working woman. I first met her several months ago, when she helped me write up a women's political meeting. Since then we have shared several assignments, but none so important as last night's, when we together covered the Grand Annual Ball of the Bismarck Society, an organization of rich foreigners who make money fast every day and spend it fast one night in the year. I have reported public balls before,

but none so large as this one. The assignment was worth remembering.

"Which side of it shall I cover?" asked little Miss Nimble as we entered the big garden.

"Costumes and names," I answered, leading the way through the throng of dancers and promenaders to the press-room and box. "Three quarters of a column will be enough. I'll write another three-quarters, including the introduction, music and by-play."

The reporters' room was already well filled with newspaper men and women who were sitting at long tables writing, as if life depended on their speed. A free supper, which, by the way, I patronized, was served at one end of the room "only to representatives of the press," as the waiter informed me. In one corner sat half a dozen messenger boys waiting to take down the copy and criticising the writers in audible whispers. Here and there stood members of the Floor Committee with elaborate badges on their coat lapels, giving particulars to the reporters. Now and then some conspicuously-dressed woman would look in and all the scribblers would ask for her name. If no one knew, they whis-

pered the question to some member of the society standing near, and upon hearing that the woman in question was the wife of Mr. Homburg, the president, they one and all jotted down something of this sort: "Mrs. Homburg in lavender satin with rich gold lace and diamonds." I noticed that a good many women looked in to the press-room and some lingered near as if to make sure we saw them. One or two came in and informed us that Mrs. So-and-so was wearing this or that. Of course, we knew that Mrs. So-and-so was not a thousand miles away, but looked innocent as we thanked her for the information.

I spent half the evening walking about the floor and looking at the crowd from the press-box. Then I went in and wrote an introduction in which I made the usual stereotyped remarks about brilliancy, splendor, success, etc.

At 10.30 o'clock I went in search of Miss Nimble. I spent half an hour looking for her without success. Miss Nimble "was not." Then I began to worry. She had all the names and the costumes, which were the most important features of the story. Anyone with a ready pencil can write introductions, but it takes a genius to handle



names and costumes cleverly. It was not, however, on account of any doubts as to my genius that I had asked Miss Nimble to take charge of the costumes and names. It was because I had considered the dresses more in her sphere, and had felt sure she would have asked me to look after the names had she been the commander and I the assistant.

When I saw the others hurriedly sending down their copy I became more anxious, and by the time only two messengers remained I decided something must be done at once. I caught sight of Harry Smithers, a *Morning Moon* reporter, still hard at work, and asked him if he had the costumes and names, telling him of my predicament.

"Yes; here they are," he answered, shoving towards me several sheets of rough copy. "There were some typewritten lists," said Smithers, "but they've all been taken away."

I seized the notes and copied them so rapidly that after they were all down I found it difficult to read what I had written. "I never wrote so fast in my life," I remarked to Smithers, who by that time had sent his copy down town. "The night

desk will go wild over this copy." Just then I heard a pleasant little voice say: "Why, Mr. Forbes, I've been looking everywhere for you." It was Miss Nimble.

"Have you the names?" I asked, savagely.

"Of course," she answered, showing me one of the typewritten lists which Smithers said had been taken away.

"And the costumes?" I growled, thinking of my unnecessary hard labor.

"Certainly," she answered smiling and handing me a batch of copy, "Half a column of them."

"You're very late, Miss Nimble," I muttered, putting the story into a big envelope which bore the printed directions: "Managing Editor, *Daily Bread*. RUSH!" "There's only one messenger left and some one else would have sent him away in another minute."

"Oh, no;" she said sweetly, straightening her hat leisurely before a mirror. "I gave him a quarter early in the evening and reserved him."

And yet they say women have no idea of time or the value of money!

*Feb. 27.*—An interesting tip was sent to the *Daily Bread* office late to-night. Journalistic tips

are the germs of news stories and come from various sources. The tipster is rarely engaged in active newspaper work, although, perhaps, at some time in his life, he has spent a few months reporting, thus learning the value of news. Now and then, owing to his large circle of acquaintances, he hears facts (or fabrications), which he knows will be valuable items of news to the papers. He brings a few of these to the office, and if anything is printed concerning them he is paid well for the tip. He rarely does any of the reporting or investigating connected with his story, that work being assigned to a member of the regular staff. If he brings the news to one paper exclusively he receives better pay than if he disseminates it elsewhere, for it gives editors the chance to publish a beat.

We were uncertain as to the exclusiveness of the tip received to-night, which was brought by a messenger, and read as follows:

“Lord Kokeby, the famous English turfman, is on his way to this country traveling *incognito*. It is said he will spend the racing season here. Is probably traveling under an assumed name to avoid interviews and publicity. He is due tomorrow on the steamer ‘Arabia.’

"This news is authentic, and is to be paid for at space rates if used.

"E. J. HAWLEY."

No one in the office knew Hawley, but the information aroused an unusual amount of interest.

Mr. Quickly, the Sporting Editor, opened his eyes very wide.

"Wonder if there's any truth in it," he muttered. "What's old Kokeby coming over here for? He hasn't been here since I used to cover the races for *The Call* twenty years ago. It may make a big story. Better send someone down to meet him."

The Managing Editor, who was looking at the tip over Quickly's shoulder, evidently agreed. "The worst of it is all my men have gone home and I can't give them instructions without telegraphing. Can you give me a man to go down and meet the "Arabia" to-morrow morning?" The Sporting Editor called to one. The latter looked over to-morrow's page in the assignment book and answered: "Yes, take Forbes if you want him." Mr. Quickly took me.

"You might as well go down to Quarantine and meet the steamer," he informed me, "so you

will have time to look around on board for Kokeby. If you can do so, be sure and get a word with him. Ask him what he's over here for, and find out all you can about his plans. This may be a beat, so keep shady about it." I said I knew enough to keep shady, and started for home.

This is the first assignment I have had from Mr. Quickly, who is what one might call an unabridged sporting almanac. There is little worth knowing about sports, sportsmen, and sporting men that Quickly doesn't know. He can tell you who holds the world's record for the mile run, and when and where said record was made. He knows just how many horses the well-known Mr. Turfly will put on the track next season. He remembers the dimensions of nearly every fast yacht in American waters, what cups said yacht holds, and what kind of weather she likes best. He can inform you as to whether it is true that "Little Bill" Slogan, the famous feather-weight, is to stand up against "Biff" Daly. He knows when the first run of the Full Cry Hounds takes place, and whether to credit the report that Olimpic University is to send a crew to England next summer. He is the man who gave Sluggem,

the champion heavyweight, the sobriquet "Gentleman Dick," and who introduced Jockey Whipton to the trainer of the Neverlose Stables when Whipton was only a stable boy, thereby bringing fame and fortune to the youngster who is now known the world over for his plucky finishes. As an authority on the rules of football, baseball, polo, and all other popular games from golf to chess, Quickly is infallible. His looks belie him, however. At first sight he might be taken for a revivalist preacher. I can readily imagine him standing on a barrel at a street corner exhorting passers-by. He wears a long Prince Albert coat, which looks as if it had been born long before Prince Albert first saw the light of day. The coat is of mixed goods—shiny black cloth mixed with dust and spots. I often wonder why he doesn't spend twenty-five cents of his \$80 per week for a whisk broom.

But perhaps the most unique feature of his apparel, which is inappropriate to his revivalistic appearance, is a small feather he wears in the band of his seedy-looking silk hat. It is little more than a quill now. Out of curiosity I once asked him its significance,

"That feather," he answered with an unmistakable feeling of sentiment, "belonged to the first game-cock I ever saw in mortal combat."

"Do you wear it as a mascot?" I asked.

"No; just in memory of the bird who doubled a week's salary for me by his skill in the pit."

To-morrow I shall go to the Custom House for a pass on the revenue cutter which is to meet the "Arabia," and shall spend the day investigating our tip concerning Lord Kokeby.

*Feb. 28.*—The day I devoted to Lord Kokeby is now passed, and I am sitting at my desk in the *Daily Bread* office, while others of the staff are lounging here and there, some asleep, some talking in little groups, and two or three others playing a quiet game of cards on the city desk, while the monotonous voice of the presses announces to those twelve floors below in the cellar that the first edition is being printed.

Before starting for the Custom House to get my pass this morning I was surprised by a visit from Frank Weatherby, the *Star's* racing reporter.

"I have come to ask a favor of you," he said. "We had a tip last night from Ed. Hawley saying that Lord Kokeby, the well-known English

turfman, arrives here to-day. I have seen Hawley, who is a friend of mine, and he tells me that he gave the tip only to *The Daily Dust* and *The Star*. Being the *Star's* racing man I have been told to work up the story. I want to ask if you will do this for me."

I immediately realized that if Weatherby didn't go down to Quarantine I should be the only newspaper man there having the knowledge of Kokeby's arrival, and that *The Daily Bread* would therefore be enabled to print a big exclusive story about his Lordship. So as we left the house I told Weatherby with as good grace as possible that I didn't think it best to do what he asked.

"How did you know I had the assignment?" I inquired.

"I was told so at the *Daily Bread* office just after you left last night."

"Did you tell them there that *The Star* had also received the tip?" Weatherby said he had not done so. When I refused he looked disappointed.

"I was anxious to take a holiday to-day," said he.

"This isn't the sort of business for holidays,"



I muttered, remembering how on more than one occasion I had been unable to give up a day's work when I had wished to do so.

"No ;" he answered, "I have only had four holidays besides my regular day off in fifteen years. But if I ever wanted a day off in the whole fifteen I want one to-day."

"What's up?" I asked with little interest.

"My wife's dying," he replied. I quickened my pace impatiently.

"I am sorry for you, Weatherby, but a beat's a beat, and not to be ignored. Your wife will live until morning, won't she?"

"The doctor has given up all hope," he returned. "She may be dead now."

I made endeavor to harden my heart, and became a villain for the sake of the beat.

"Wait a minute, Forbes, and I'll go with you. I live here," he called, pointing to a dingy-looking boarding-house. "I'll just stop in and say a word to her and then go and get a pass for the cutter."

I didn't feel in the mood for waiting. In fact I wanted to forget Weatherby as soon as possible, but I followed him into the house. We were met

at the door by a little fellow no higher than my knee with sunny curls hanging over the threadbare shoulders of a coat too small even for him.

"I say, dad," asked the child wistfully, "what's muzzer mean by sayin' she's doin' away for ever and ever? Muzzer's jokin', isn't she, dad?"

Weatherby took the child in his arms and hurried upstairs. I wished I hadn't waited. Soon he came down again.

"How is she?" I asked, opening the door.

"God only knows how long she'll live."

We were leaving the house when the boy called over the banister: "Tum bat to me soon, dad. I'll be all 'lone by myself if muzzer doze away."

"Weatherby," said I gruffly, "I'll meet Kokeby and give your paper my interview with him. You stay here."

He grasped my hand gratefully, but I shook him off and hurried away rather ill-humoredly.

Lord Kokeby arrived and (as the tip had stated) his real name did not appear on the passenger list. I found him after a confidential chat with the chief steward.

"By Jove!" exclaimed his Lordship after I

had called him by that title and explained my mission. "You American reporters would find a man even were he disguised and traveling in another planet. I don't see how you plan it. Haw ! haw !" I laughed at this specimen of English wit just to please his Lordship, although above all things I dislike punning, which is to humor what the tune of a squeaky hand-organ is to music—a desecration. I was pleased, however, to find Lord Kokeby of a jovial disposition and resignedly telling me his plans.

When I returned to the office after having taken the interview to the Night Editor of *The Star*, Mr. Quickly greeted me with: "Well, Forbes, to beat or not to beat ?"

"Not to beat," I answered a little sulkily, thinking of Weatherby and his wife.

## CHAPTER XIII.

INTERVIEWS — DOGMATIC MAELSTROMS — TRAINS  
AND INDEFINITE TELEGRAMS—HOW I SAID  
GOOD-BY TO HERR SLOVINSKY.

MARCH 1.—I have held interviews with nearly every sort and condition of man upon almost every conceivable topic. I have obtained the opinions of reverend gentlemen concerning all manner of religious subjects, and have found it pleasanter to interview them than to sit listening to their sermons, partly because in an interview I have a chance to do some of the talking myself. I am not unlike the sailor who said he preferred the Protestant Episcopal service to any other, because in it there was a chance to “jaw back.” My usual assignment on Sunday is to report a sermon. I may therefore boast of being a very regular attendant at church, and of having reported sermons by Baptist brethren, well-known Episcopalians, Methodists, and Presbyterians; theologic discourses by “Jews, Turks, infidels, and heathen,” and eloquent lectures by theosophists, Mohammedans, agnostics, atheists,

and by all manner of free thinkers, conventional thinkers, and real thinkers. If a man hears everything he is apt to believe nothing, and so I am now unable to call any single faith my own.

How fortunate a fellow he is who in sailing on over the ocean of life steers clear of the great maelstrom of dogma! Lucky the man whose craft sails only on the wide, open ocean! He's clear of the rocks and the shallows and the shoals and the currents that would render his rudder useless; clear of the ever-multiplying creeds that would draw him now this way, now that, until from utter exhaustion he relaxed his hold on the helm and consented to be carried by any one of them on, on, and on to—where? I have often watched a bird in the air. The gale comes. The winds blow and for an instant the bird goes with them. But soon it flies far above and looks down peacefully to the blinding wind-storm near the earth. It must live in the air of the skies; not in that which sweeps the roadways, gathering dust and suffocation. And that's what we want—air, pure air, air from above; not the countless miasmas that cover the ground. I once saw a crowd endeavoring to resuscitate a man who lay

on the shore apparently dead from drowning. The fellow had been brought to land unconscious, and in an instant he was surrounded by a loud-talking, excited, curious group of men and women.

“Give him brandy!” shouted one. “Do this!” cried another. “No; that!” called a third. Every one shouted advice and all gathered close about the dying man. On the outskirts of the crowd a voice called: “For God’s sake give him air!” but no one heeded and the man died. Why cannot the crowd of ready-tongued, loud-voiced spiritual advisers give us air? Like the man on the outskirts of the crowd I call: “For God’s sake give us air, air that we may breathe, the air that was made for us! Give us air!” But none will hear me. This is merely a diary.

I have talked with politicians small and great from the ward man to the mayor regarding nominations and elections past and to come, and nearly every phase of the municipal government. I have discussed Woman Suffrage with leading representatives of what was once known as the “gentler sex.” I have interviewed prominent bankers on the financial outlook, including the Silver Question and the gold reserve. With

well-known merchants and other commercial folk I have talked of a few notable business successes and a large number of failures. In fact, it seems as though I had interviewed every one about everything, and had quoted at length the opinions of so many people that now I hardly remember whether there was once a time when I had an opinion of my own.

On the whole I am not especially fond of interviewing. The majority of those whose opinions I have written have seemed to look upon me as though, like his Satanic majesty, I was ever going about seeking whom I might devour. They regard themselves as the victims, and, although I am really a very peaceable and unoffending man by nature, this view they take is not unlikely to make quite a brigand of me. So often are our natures molded by others' opinions of us.

Some interviews are easily obtained while others are to be had only after the reporter has called into play the last bit of ingenuity he has in him. I remember a series of interviews to which I was assigned last autumn. They were upon the highly interesting subject, "Should charity begin at home?" I never knew why the

City Editor chose this question for the subject of a five-column article in *The Sunday Bread*. Perhaps it really interested him, or possibly he thought some solitary reader might be glad to know whether or not the leading divines of the city thought domestic charity more worthy than the sending of alms to Africa or the South Sea Islands. Be this as it may, I spent the best part of four days discussing the question with prominent ministers of the Gospel. I don't remember any of the opinions given. Some said one thing, some another. The truth is, some were greatly interested in domestic missionary societies, while others were opening the purses of their congregations for the heathen of foreign lands. I wonder whether, after the dozen or more illustrious ecclesiastical opinions were published, a single reader's individual view of the case was changed.

It is less troublous to interview a clergyman than any one else. He always seems ready to talk. Lawyers are different. To obtain the views of a lawyer on a subject which he doesn't wish to discuss is about as hard as it would be to hold a debate on Evolution with a slumbering oyster. After a lawyer, or any other man has



for the twentieth time refused to be interviewed there is but one resource left to the interviewer. That man must be made angry. This may be done in several ways according to his temper. By this method he may be made to say "Damn," or some equally forcible word, and after having done so he will probably be in mortal terror of having his exclamation published, and will usually give the required interview to find favor in the reporter's eyes, and to avoid having his expression of profanity printed in good-sized, black-faced type in the headlines.

Speaking of interviews reminds me of one I had two or three weeks ago with Herr Slovinsky, the famous musician. The interview might have been very pleasant, and I might have gone up to see the violinist in his apartment and enjoyed his plans for his coming trip, together with a couple of his choicest cigars, as I had not infrequently done on previous occasions. But unfortunately I had no idea I was to interview Herr Slovinsky until twelve minutes before the hour his steamer sailed. I have always blamed the City Editor for not having told me earlier in the day. I don't know whether he forgot Slovinsky was to sail, or

whether he withheld the news from me until 2.48 P.M. so as to give me the chance to indulge in some very spirited exercise. However, at twelve minutes to three o'clock Ripley called: "I say, Forbes, Slovinsky leaves at three on the 'Nomadic.' Find out his plans for the trip. You'll have to hurry." I glanced at the clock and didn't wait to put on my coat, but grabbed my hat and rushed from the office. Fortunately I am experienced in catching trains at short notice. One does not have to become a reporter to gain that sort of experience. I have not yet decided which is the most exciting pastime—to meet an incoming steamer or to say farewell to one that is just about to leave, but can there be anything less conducive to tranquillity in a man's heart than an incoming train heralded by an indefinite telegram? You sit down to a quiet little breakfast with your wife. Probably you are very tired; you have been up late the night before. You are leisurely sipping your coffee and reading aloud with a good deal of idle interest the latest news of the war in the East, or the strike in the West. You are looking forward to the hour or two before going downtown with real satisfaction.

You have just found the most appetizing roll on the table and the most interesting item of news in the paper, each of which you have just begun to devour with great relish, when suddenly the servant comes in with a yellow-covered envelope. You instantly lay aside the paper and roll while a troubled expression crosses your face. You read the dispatch aloud as follows: "Am coming on nine o'clock train. Meet me." It's from a friend in the country. You look hastily at your watch, which says 8.15.

"No," you exclaim, "I haven't time to get there." But the dining-room clock says only eight, so you hurriedly say good-by to the roll and the bit of news. Just before you have left the house, however, you glance at the telegram again, and notice that it does not say whether the train left your friend's home at nine or whether it arrives in New York at nine. You inwardly anathematize your friend for having said "the nine o'clock train," and declare that there should be no such way of talking about trains.

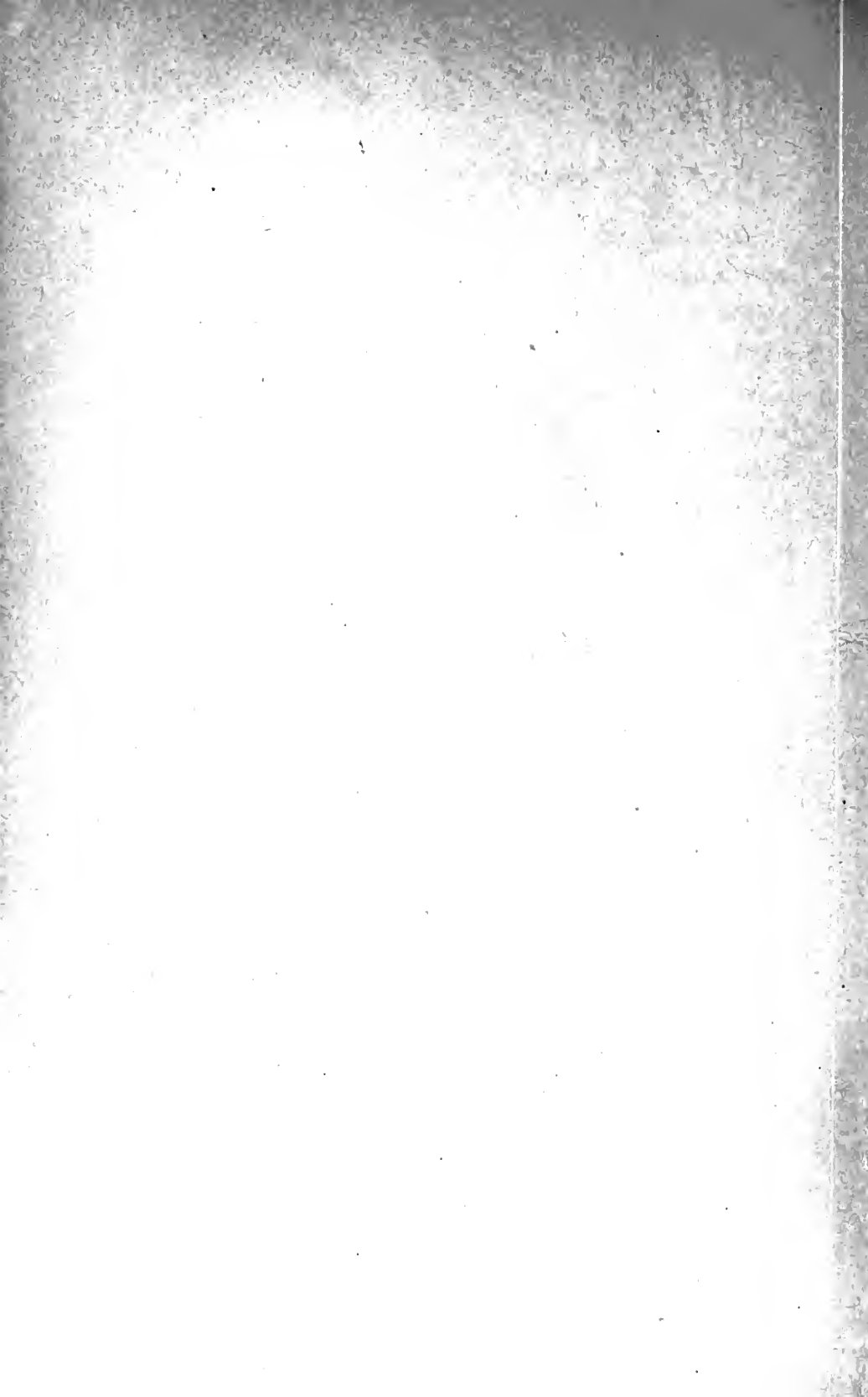
Frantically you and Alice search the house for a time-table, which, if your lucky star is at its zenith on that particular day, you find at the end

of a very long half hour. The train *arrives* at nine. You have twenty-five minutes in which to catch it, and you are warm, flustered, and much annoyed. After having spent ten minutes in the downtown car vainly endeavoring to recover your usual happy frame of mind, you suddenly wonder whether your friend intends to come by the upper or lower ferry. You have not time to cross the river and meet him at the other side. You quite realize the importance of your decision regarding which ferry you had better go to. You have just decided to meet him at the uptown station when the car arrives at the station where you should get off. Then you rush madly to the car door, leaving behind your umbrella and newspaper, but you are sure to be too late. The guard, who is as high and mighty as the elevated road itself, closes the gate, thereby imprisoning you, much to the merriment of your fellow-passengers. Then you decide that after all your friend will probably arrive at the downtown ferry; moreover, you have regained your umbrella and newspaper, which is one consolation. Then you stand on the car's platform so as not to be carried past your destination.



You are running wildly across town.

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At two minutes to nine o'clock you are running wildly across town. You take out your watch half a dozen times to see if it agrees with the clocks in the store windows you are passing.

You eagerly scan the faces of the crowd as it leaves the ferry-boat, but you don't see your friend. You didn't expect to do so. You mutter that you knew he would come by the other ferry, and that, but for the stupidity of that elevated guard, whom you wish in anything but an elevated place, you would not have missed the visitor. If you are a morning newspaper man you still have two or three hours to spare before your day's work begins, so you wearily return to your home, making solemn promises to yourself that you will never again meet a train which like most of its kind has been heralded by an indefinite telegram.

Your wife meets you at the front door with an air of pleasant expectancy, but upon finding you alone she looks greatly surprised and even worried. You probably say in a guileless and reassuring way: "He didn't come, but he will probably arrive by a later train." Just then you hear suppressed laughter in the sitting-room and

your friend rushes out asking where you have been "all this time." You try to smile a welcome and look pleasant, but at the end of the week, when you are talking alone with your wife, you mutter something about her having been very wrong to deceive you. She doesn't know what you mean, having forgotten her little joke, so she becomes very much hurt and offended, and you have to apologize to her. After that you write a model telegram for your friend to send when he comes next time, but the same thing is sure to happen again.

When I left the *Daily Bread* office to see Slovinisky off on the "Nomadic" I knew that I had but one chance of being successful. The foreign mails, if unusually large, are often delayed, and the steamer is obliged to wait for them. Knowing this I ran quickly to the Mail Street end of the General Post Office, and hurriedly asked a driver standing near if the mail had left for the "Nomadic." He said no, and showed me a big truck into which hundreds of mail bags were being thrown. I made certain the wagon was bound for the "Nomadic's" pier, and then looked about for a cab. Cabs don't frequent Park Row, however, and there was none



in sight. I thought of asking the truck-driver to take me with him to the steamer, but deciding I should lose time by so doing, I climbed into a tradesman's cart standing near and asked the driver to whip up his horse and take me to the "Nomadic's" dock in the biggest kind of a hurry. The young fellow looked at the half dollar I had dropped into his hand and consented. I arrived at the pier before the mails, and luckily knowing Slovinsky by sight, I soon found him on deck. Then the mails arrived, and a score of men began carrying the bags from the great dray to the ship. I watched the lading while I asked Slovinsky questions and jotted down his answers. By the time the last bag had been deposited on board I had obtained all the necessary information.

"Do you reporters ever do anything slowly?" asked the musician as I left the steamer.

"Very rarely," I called from the dock as the gang-plank was drawn away. "I wish we did now and then," I muttered to myself while I trudged back to the office.

## CHAPTER XIV.

“CURTAIN.”

MARCH 5.—After the curtain goes down on the next to the last act in the play, the father, or uncle, or guardian hurries to the dressing-room and changes his dark wig for a grey one, and with the aid of a little black paint makes up as a very old man with deep wrinkles and a careworn expression. When we see him in the last act he sits once more before the fire and writes a letter, while his wife, now also made up with a grey wig and wrinkles, sits knitting beside him hopeful and expectant. After the letter is sent with all speed to the city (which the audience is given to understand is but a few miles distant), the aged couple begin to reminisce, and in other uninteresting ways to fill up the space of time which must elapse before an answer can be received. Soon, however, the audience hears a knock at the door and the old couple hobble over to it and throw it open, whereupon the prodigal, now crestfallen, shabby-looking, and weary, comes in to be forgiven, and the curtain goes

down leaving the upper gallery happy and satisfied.

I received a very eccentric letter from my uncle this morning, and, after reading it, I exclaimed: "Most extraordinary! About what can the old man want to see me?" and Alice, who looked on over my shoulder, said it *did* seem strange that he should write after having told me a year ago never again to come near him. I showed the note to Robinson who was standing near. He read it and exclaimed with a puzzled expression: "Sam, that uncle of yours must be a queer old codger." This was the note that surprised us all:

DEAR SAMUEL: The most important thing in my life is about to take place—namely, my death. I am told that you are in the newspaper business. If this is true I want to see you before I die. Come at once.

Your uncle,

F.

I don't understand why the old man wishes to see me because I am a reporter, but I have never been able to account for his eccentricities. He probably thinks he will die happier if he says good-by to me, but I don't know why I should

give him the satisfaction of a happy death. He has not taken much trouble to make me happy in the past twelve months. I might have starved without his knowledge. Alice, however, advises me to go and see him, so I shall ask leave of absence from the office and take the next train to Sailors' Harbor, where my erratic old relative makes his abode.

3 P.M.—Am on the train bound for Sailors' Harbor. This is the first time I have been in this part of the country since the unpleasant leave-taking which I have recorded on the first pages of this diary. As the train hurries on, now through the wood-land, now by the side of the half frozen harbor, I go back in thought to twenty years ago when I used to visit Uncle Frederick in the holidays, and when he used to take me to drive with him on the roads I am now passing. I remember his spanking team of trotters, the pride of the country for miles around and for which he once assured me Farmer Cranston, who lives near the old mill, had offered him several thousands of dollars and I forget how many head of cattle. Those were merry, careless days. I used to spend part of

the summer with my aunt and the other with my uncle, but I don't remember which visit I enjoyed the more. Each relative used to ask me, and with childish tact I always managed to please them by my answer. They always disliked each other, but I never knew why until several years after the old lady died. I won't bore my diary with the reason. I never stayed at the old farm in winter. There were always leaves on the trees, sunlight on the water, and warmth and gladness everywhere when I was there in my boyhood. Now the leaves are gone and the sky is grey, and there is ice in the water and snow everywhere. And Uncle F. is dying. I wonder if the old horses are still in the barn. They were last year, but they were weak kneed and one was going blind. I wonder if "Bill," the queerest old farm hand that ever lived, is there. He was a twelve-month ago, but he used to sit before his stove in the barn while his old woman, as he called her, read the Bible to him, and he used to tell me he was "preparing." And I wonder if the "dear old dame," as I called her in my boyhood, is still keeping house for Uncle F. She was there when I left last year, and I remember her tears at my

leaving, but she said she felt sure she was going home soon—wherever that may be.

The train is nearing Sailors' Harbor. I must stop my fruitless scribbling.

*March 6.*—I have seen him and am now sitting in the old dismal-looking spare room I remember to have thought so large and dark and empty in my boyhood. The old man cannot live long. I arrived here early last evening and found him anxiously and impatiently awaiting my arrival. The door was opened by a servant I had never seen before, and it was not until the doctor came down that I saw a familiar face. Dr. Miles is the only physician in Sailors' Harbor. I remember when he used to take tea with my uncle on Sunday evenings in the old days, and that he was always a warmhearted fellow who roared when he laughed, and invariably leaned back when he sat down. The doctor said I could go up and see Uncle F., and I did so. The old man sat bolt upright in bed when I entered his room, and held out his hand with never a word of greeting. We were alone. The room was dark save for the light of the half-risen moon which cast a pale glare upon the wall above the bed. The leafless

branches of an old tree swaying to and fro and sighing by the window cast on the moonlit wall gaunt shadows which seemed as messengers of death beckoning the old man. By the bedside there stood a small table holding numerous medicine bottles, pill boxes, and measuring glasses at which the wind sighing through the old tree seemed to laugh in mockery. The quaint, low-ceilinged room with its worn-out carpet and its antique furniture looked as I had always seen it. I could spy through the darkness the same faded Madonna which had hung over the mantel for thirty years or more, and by its side the same old hunting print, and over the book-case the landscape in oils my uncle once bought in exchange for his sorrel mare, and all the other pictures and ornaments in his motley collection.

I sat down by him waiting for him to speak. His first question was: "Samuel, are you still in the newspaper business?" I coldly told him that I was. "I am glad you came," he went on, "I am dying. There can be no doubt of it, and it's high time I should. All the others have gone. Bill died two or three months ago, and the old dame went home, as she expressed it, before him,

We had to shoot the trotters, and not even the dog, Fritz, is left. There are a lot of new faces around me, Samuel, and I do not like new faces. Never did. The doctor is an old friend, but who looks kindly on a doctor when one is on one's death bed? Remember, Samuel, to tell anyone who asks how I died that I said I did not mind dying—not a bit. Down in the village they say hard things about me. They talk of my meanness; they call me uncharitable; they say I have driven sharp bargains with them and dunned them mercilessly for their rent. Don't say it isn't so, Samuel. I have heard tell of it many a time, but I don't mind their talk. They are a lot of idle gossips—everyone of them. Who always had the fastest horses in the country? Who always came home with the biggest mess of fish at night, and who was the truest shot? It's only envy that makes them talk, Samuel. If a man is thrifty and knows how to save his money better than a dissolute spendthrift there is never a good word for him. They don't remember what he's done for them. What man or woman in Sailors' Harbor tells of how I adopted a miserable foundling when its mother died, or of how



I hounded the rascally father until he shot himself? If anyone speaks of it they look knowing and hint that I was the father myself. Old Bill told me of their lies. If they ever say anything of that sort to you after I am gone tell them they lie, Samuel. Every one of them. Who in the village tells of how I kept many an old couple from the poor house by giving them cottages, rent free? No one. They harp on my meanness and curse me for a miser."

At this the old man lay back exhausted from so much talking, and although I had determined to treat him without any show of affection I could not help taking his hand in mine and telling him he must be mistaken regarding the villagers' opinions of him.

"I don't care what they say," he told me faintly, "I sent for you because you know me better than the rest. It isn't very pleasant to have a lot of enemies around one's deathbed. You and I have been enemies for some time, Samuel, but I will forgive you if you want me to."

I felt inclined to tell him that I did not think there was anything to forgive, but the sight of

his weakness made me say, although perhaps a little sulkily, that I should be glad to be forgiven.

“Then we’ll let bygones be bygones,” he said with a pleased look, “and bury the hatchet. I don’t think I ever asked a favor of any one in my life,” he went on, “but I want you to promise me something. Promise you won’t allow any of those miserable curs from the village to come to my funeral. I know they will want to come. They will be as anxious as they are to go to the circus. They will want to see the last of me. They will scramble for good seats and will bring flowers. I don’t want one of their flowers near me. They have hated me in life, let them keep away and continue to hate after I am dead. I don’t want post-mortem reconciliations.”

I told him the funeral should be strictly private, but that I believed he might live for some time longer. He assured me testily, however, that I was wrong. After a few minutes of silence he sat up again. “There is one more reason why I sent for you,” he began. “I want to have my obituary published.” When he made this announcement I understood the meaning of his note,

and could hardly help smiling at the whim and the vanity which had prompted it. "I want," he went on eagerly, "to have the record of my life appear in print to give the lie to those who slander me. Can you arrange to publish my obituary in your paper?"

I said with as good grace as possible that the papers only printed obituaries of men and women who had made a name for themselves in the world of art, letters, or any other field where there is a chance for fame.

"Don't they pay tribute to a man who has fought for his country?" the old man asked, disappointedly.

I said the obituaries of old soldiers were often printed, provided the old soldiers had done something of which the world should know.

"Well," he said, "I have written an account of my service in the Civil War, and want it published. You may read it and tell me what the chances are of getting it into print. The boys used to call me 'Fighting Fred.'" (The old man's eyes lighted up at the memory of war times.) "And there weren't many who would cross swords with me,"

"You haven't told me this before," I said, after having glanced over the autobiography.

"No;" he answered, "there's little pleasure in talking of war times with you youngsters, who only see a soldier parading on the avenue, and rarely hear a drum-call outside of an armory, but I would like the world to know something about it, and to put to shame those ungrateful blackguards in the village."

I told him I thought *The Daily Bread* would be glad to publish his obituary, and later in the evening I sent it to our Managing Editor asking if he would print a half column of it after the old man's death.

*March 7.*—"Your uncle is weaker this morning," Dr. Miles told me when he came after breakfast. "He cannot last long." I went in to see the old man again, but found him less talkative. He lay with his back toward me and appeared to be asleep most of the time. Once he asked how soon I thought we should receive an answer concerning the obituary and to tell him candidly if I thought *The Daily Bread* would publish it. I spoke encouragingly and he seemed satisfied. At another time he said: "You will never regret printing it, Samuel."

*March 8.*—I received a short note from Farley this morning saying he had kept the obituary and would give it the space I named, and asking for the old man's photograph. Uncle F. looked relieved and happy after I read the letter to him and repeated that I should never regret publishing his obituary. I found an old photo of him which he said I might have, although he declared it a miserable likeness.

*March 8.*—I was leisurely eating my breakfast this morning in the dining-room where twenty years ago I used to revel in mince pies and a variety of delicacies which I said were never to be found in any other house (inwardly excepting my aunt's), when Dr. Miles came down and told me to hurry upstairs as my uncle was very low and might die at any minute. I left my meal half finished and went to his bedside.

"Don't let any one else into the room," whispered Uncle F. feebly as we entered. "I don't want any of those new faces near me, doctor—no new faces."

The shadows of the branches were still upon the wall above the bed, but now they were dancing merrily in the strong light of the morning sun as

if holding gay carnival in expectation of an event for which they had long been waiting. The old man lay quite still breathing with difficulty. His eyes shone brightly. He looked through the open window far off—past the orchard, past the snow-covered fields, past the harbor with its ice of a thousand colors in the sunlight, and past the many hills which arose like giant specters in the distance—he looked far beyond all these to the sky and for all I know beyond the sky.

A cloud was hurrying toward the sun. The old man watched it intently. Only for a moment he looked at me and then he held out his hand and whispered: "Samuel, thanks for your favor. Show the article to some of the village folk and tell them they—tell them——" Here his breathing became labored and he paused to regain a little of his rapidly-failing strength. "Tell them they didn't half know Fighting Fred—no; they ——"

The black cloud covered the sun and the shadows ceased their jubilee upon the wall.

"No ; none of us knew him," said the doctor huskily.

"Very true," I answered, and we left the room,

*March 9.*—My uncle's obituary appeared in this morning's paper and I shall go back to the city early next week.

*March 19.*—I am resting after a hard day's work, talking to Alice as I write. I received a letter this morning in a very long and official-looking envelope from Clark & Worden, Attorneys and Counselors-at-law, Sailors' Harbor.

After reading it several times I managed to unravel the intricacies of legal language and learn that my uncle had left me his sole heir.

I have tired of the newspaper business and shall start to travel around the world in a few weeks. Traveling broadens a man and I need broadening. Everyone does. Alice has just remarked: "Now we can buy the sofa, can't we, Sam?"

"Yes," I answer as I jot this down. I shall now be able to talk more with Alice than with editors and reporters, and shall be able to dream in the day-time occasionally instead of rushing about at all hours gathering news. I like to dream in the day-time now and then. There can be no doubt that reportorial work is not conducive to the sort of life a family man should lead. And I am a

family man now, for lo, and behold, there is a little Alice!

*March 20.*—I went down to the *Daily Bread* office this afternoon and emptied the drawers of my desk. This was no small undertaking. In the desk there were the thousand and one little things which had accumulated during the year and a half of my newspaper career—innumerable scraps of paper, countless clippings which had been the foundations of various news-stories; broken penholders, pencils varying in length from one inch to a pencil's normal size; a couple of old corncob pipes, letters, notebooks, "hard copy," old proof-sheets, a little tobacco in a box and a great deal everywhere else.

"What's this—moving day?" asked Scrabbles, as he watched me throwing away the débris. Upon hearing of my good fortune he took possession of one of my corncob pipes, filled it with some of the ever-present tobacco, lighted it with the last unburnt match in the desk, and said: I'll keep this to remember you by. Much obliged. Hope to see you again soon. Good luck to you, Forbes." Then he hurried away.

I went and shook hands with the City Editor.



“Drop in some time again, Forbes. If you’re ever hard up I’ll find an assignment for you. You’re well out of this business; it’s all work and no pay.” Then I went in to see Farley.

“Good-by, Mr. Forbes. By the way, if you ever hear any news like that Marteau story bring it down to me. That was an excellent beat.” Then he went on dictating a letter to his stenographer and I left him.

I put on my overcoat and shook hands at random, wrapped up my worn-out office coat in a copy of this morning’s *Daily Bread* and opened the editorial room door. I held it ajar for a moment and looked back.

No one noticed me.

I saw Ripley making the schedule of evening assignments; I saw the reporters grinding out news; I saw Jenkins scribbling social gossip amid a cloud of cigarette smoke; I saw Barrel, Tome and the writer of snappy editorials holding a heated discussion in one corner, and Miss Nimble straightening her hat in another; and I saw office boys running here, there, and everywhere; doing everything and nothing. When I glanced at my desk and noticed that it had already

been given to a new reporter, I remembered a favorite saying of Scrabbles: "The shoes of one newspaper man invariably fit another."

Then I closed the door.

THE END.









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LE Payson, William Farquhar  
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